DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 201 185 FL 012 188

TITLE	National Syllabuses. ELT Documents, 108.
INSTITUTION	British Council, London (England). English-Teaching Information Centre.
REPORT NO	BC-ELT-108
PUB DATE	80
NOTE	104p.
AVAILABLE FROM	The British Council, Printing and Publishing Department, 65 Davies Street, London W1Y 2AA, England (2.50 British pounds).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Curriculum Development; Educational Assessment; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Language Proficiency; *Language Tests; *Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning
IDENTIFIERS	Europe; *International Assn Evaluators Educ Achievement; Poland

ABSTRACT

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) tested the high school populations of a number of foreign countries in English as a foreign language. The test is described and results are reported. A variety of specific findings and their implications for curriculum development in English as a foreign language are related in the following articles: (1) "The Implication of the IEA Study" by Ian Dunlop; (2) "Language Proficiency Tests Developed for the IEA International Study of Achievement in English as a Foreign Language" by Carolyn Emrich Massad; (3) "Linguistic and Communicative Competence in Polish School Leavers" by Hanna H. Komorowska; (4) "Getting English into Perspective" by Douglas Pickett; (5) "Syllabus Construction for Foreign Language Teaching: Reconciling the Approaches" by William R. Lee; and (6) "Differences in Teaching, for Different Circumstances--or the Teacher as Chameleon" by Peter Strevens. (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED201185

ELT documents

108 - National Syllabuses

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

The British Council

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The British Council

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIVISION CENTRAL INFORMATION SERVICE

FL012188

ISBN 0 901618 35 7

© The British Council, 1980
Produced in England by The British Council, Printing and Publishing Department, London

3M/10/80

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION G D Pickett The British Council	5
The Implication of the IEA Study Ian Dunlop, The Language Centre, Brighton	9
Language proficiency tests developed for the IEA international study of achievement in English as a foreign language Carolyn Emrick Massad, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ	24
Linguistic and communicative competence in Polish school leavers Hanna H Komorowska, Institute for School Curricula, Warsaw, Poland	40
Getting English into perspective Douglas Pickett, The British Council, London	54
Extract from: The International Evaluation of Educational Achievement - A Review Alex Inkeles, Stanford University	74
Syllabus construction for foreign language teaching: reconciling the approaches William R Lee	81
Differences in teaching, for different circumstances - or the teacher as chameleon Peter Strevens, Wolfson College, Cambridge	86
Letter to the Editor	100.

INTRODUCTION

Comparisons may be odious but they are also essential to the measurement of any sort of achievement either individual, institutional or national. Comparisons between individuals are regularly made within education systems in the form of tests, examinations and continuous assessment reports. The techniques for doing so are relatively well established though there is plenty of room for technical argument about reliability, validity, predictive value, bias etc. Some educationalists would argue that measurement and comparison create and perpetuate divisions between individuals that it is the purpose of education to obviate. However, they tend to be a minority, if not among educationalists, then at least among the millions of others, including students, parents, employers and governments, who have a direct interest in education and a large financial commitment to it. As investors in and consumers of education these have a right to know what is succeeding and what is failing and according to what criteria they are doing so. War is too important a matter to be left to the generals and education is similarly too important a matter to be left to the educationalists. Comparison on the individual level is therefore with us whether we like it or not and instead of declaiming against it we should be making the best use of it as a check on the input to education.

Comparison and measurement at a higher level are equally if not more important but much more difficult to achieve. Many more variables have to be taken into account, instruments have to be designed to test them their causal relationship to effects is perilously attenuated and there is always the nagging fear that the things we are comparing are intrinsically incomparable. When conclusions are drawn, however valid they may be, they are unlikely to be immediately applicable at the individual level to the benefit of the present generation of school students. Rather they are more likely to reveal the importance of factors that can only be eradicated or brought into play by long-term structural changes at national or institutional level. It may be difficult or impossible to implement these changes because of more or less intractable social, historical, economic or political factors. So why bother?

The fact that the International Evaluation Association specifically exists to bother should be a comfort to us and the study that has given rise to this issue of *ELT Documents* is the most thorough, rigorous, and sophisticated attempt to compare and measure the achievement of education systems cross-nationally in respect of six key school subjects: science, literature (mother tongue), reading comprehension (mother tongue), English, French, and civics. As Professor Inkeles (1) states in his penetrating review of the project (p.141):

"What was wanted was a comparison of the 'output' of school systems not in terms of numbers promoted or degrees granted, but in the form of measures of specific competencies such as those in reading or mathematics. Also newly required were estimates of the relative 'productivity' or 'effectiveness' of different national systems. This, in its turn, required measurement and assessment of such 'inputs' as the training of teachers, the quality of school buildings and even the motivation of pupils."

How far the study succeeded as a whole can be gauged from the concluding section of the Inkeles review (pp 191-199) which, with the author's kind permission and that of the copyright holders, we have reproduced in full. How far the study produced conclusions of importance to TEFL can be judged from the volume of the study devoted to that subject (2) and from the articles in this issue, two of them by participants in the original study, Dr Carolyn E Massad and Dr Ian Dunlop.

It is regrettable that E Glyn Lewis himself was not able to contribute owing to ill health but I am grateful to him for his assistance in the early stages of setting up this issue. The article from Poland by Dr Hanna Komarowska printed by kind permission of *Glottodidactica* who are publishing the original Polish version is not derived from the IEA study but is an attempt to measure national achievement in TEFL along lines with which the IEA researchers would sympathise and producing results that tend to confirm some of the IEA findings.

On a more general theme we have included an article by W R Lee, who discusses the relative merits of structural and notional syllabuses, and one by Peter Strevens, who explores the hypothesis that "to be effective in promoting learning, teaching must take account of a large number of variables".

My own article is an attempt to apply the conclusions and implications of the IEA study to some of the tasks which the British Council traditionally undertakes in many countries of the world, principally advising on English language policy, curriculum reform, syllabus design, and the training of English teachers.

---

(1) Alex Inkeles *The International Evaluation of Educational Achievement Proceedings of the National Academy of Education* Vol. 4 (1977) pp.139-20.

(2) E Glyn Lewis and Carolyn E Massad *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries*, Almquist and Wiksell, Stockholm, and John Wiley and Sons (Halsted Press) London and New York, 1975.

An encouraging starting point is the comment by Inkeles (3) that the scattered evidence "suggests that the schools in the less developed countries are actually as **effective** as the schools in the more advanced countries. That is, the typical **gain** in knowledge and skill, expressed as a per cent of what was known the year before on a test common to all, is basically the same for comparable sets of children regardless of which national school system they are in." In other words, what makes the rich and developed countries of northern Europe top of the league in TEFL achievement is the already high educational plateau they start from, not the greater effectiveness of their teachers and school systems. These countries are all over "a critical threshold that makes schools basically effective" (4) and "sets of students who are of the same age and who are representative of their respective cohorts do not perform markedly better or worse on standard tests." (5)

A great deal of private energy and public money goes into improving 'teaching' and I have never yet been in a country, whether near the top of the league or the bottom, where it was **not** felt that the classroom performance of teachers ought to be improved. Thanks to the IEA study we now have evidence that this concern may have been misplaced and that resources need to be diverted elsewhere if substantial improvements are to be attained.

So much for the good news. The bad news is that national achievement in English may well be a function of other factors over which English advisors, teachers and inspectors have no control or, at any rate, have not hitherto sought to have control. If we ever deluded ourselves that English, or any other school subject for that matter, was autonomous and could be cultivated in a vacuum, the IEA study disabuses us and amply demonstrates that if we want to see improvements that justify the expense of seeking them we have to bid for more time, resources and attitudinal support against other subjects on the timetable that may have an equal or better claim to them. It also shows, however, that what goes on in the schools is decisive in determining achievement and is not a mere placebo to results that have already been determined by the learner's social background. So the effort of bidding will be worthwhile. While this is encouraging at the individual level, at the national level the influence of background material factors may be more decisive since there is some correlation between achievement and Gross National Product. There is a widespread belief that national achievement in English **contributes** to economic and social development but it could just as well be argued from the IEA study that, on the contrary, achievement in English is the **result** of development; not because **teaching** is better or worse as between developed and less developed countries but because an accumulation of factors related to poverty depress the educational plateau from which the teachers in the latter have to start

---

(3) op.cit.p.169. My emphasis.
(4) Inkeles loc.cit. p.127
(5) ibid. p.176

7

It is for national policy makers to decide what objectives are to be pursued and what role English is to play in them, if any. The IEA study provides them with guidelines as to what can reasonably be expected. Furthermore, it provides the basis for a dialogue with teachers, advisers and inspectors in adjusting targets and allocating resources. It does not show that one methodology works better than another but rather that, given the right milieu, several different methodologies can be equally successful. This turns the limelight on the milieu, (the 'system', to adopt a cosy cliche) and removes some of the onus for improving performance from the teacher and learner on their own. This is not to say that teachers and learners do not remain the heart of the system; only that their relationships to each other and to the system itself deserve to be looked at as a complex whole. In millions of cases, no doubt, effective learning takes place regardless of the system. The learner still holds the key to the process and **individual** achievement remains largely a matter between the learner and the teacher. **National** achievement, however, is the concern of advisers, administrators, teacher trainers, governments, prospective employers and a host of other people who are not in a position to reach the individual learner and can only operate on 'the system' in the hope that the system will ultimately affect individuals to their benefit. It might be argued that the hope is vain but it is nonetheless widespread and shared by the hundreds of TEFL professionals working above the classroom level for whom this issue of *ELT Documents* has been prepared. We believe that discussion of the issues raised here will sustain that hope and speed its fulfilment.

G D Pickett

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE IEA STUDY

Ian Dunlop, The Language Centre, Brighton

The IEA[1] Six Subject International Survey decided to evaluate educational achievement in Science, Reading Comprehension, Literature, English as a Foreign Language, French as a Foreign Language, and Civic Education. English as a Foreign Language and French as a Foreign Language were tested in 1971 and the results published in Carroll (1975), Dunlop (1975) and Lewis & Massad (1975). The following countries were tested for English:

Population II (students aged 14.00 to 14.11 at the time of testing):
Belgium (French speakers), Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Thailand.

Population IV (students in the final year of those full-time secondary education programmes which were either pre-university programmes or programmes of the same length):
Belgium (French speaking), Chile, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Thailand.

The following countries were tested in French as a Foreign Language:

Population II:
England and Wales, New Zealand, Rumania, Scotland, United States.

Population IV:
Chile, England and Wales, New Zealand, Rumania, Scotland, Sweden, United States.

This article is mainly concerned with the findings concerning English as a Foreign Language but the report on French as a Foreign Language will also be referred to.

Size of the English Study

The table below shows the numbers taking part in this survey and although not every country took part in every test in EFL the fact that altogether some 26,000 school pupils in 10 countries took part gives some indication of the size of the project.

Reasons for an international study [2]

The aim was *not* to conduct a sort of Olympics in educational achievement but "to study the relationship between relevant input factors in the social, economic and pedagogic realm and output as measured by performance on international tests measuring both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes". (IEA.1970)

Table 1 N's for Participation in the IEA English as a Foreign Language Study

	Belgium (Fr.)	Chile	FRG	Finland	Hungary	Israel	Italy	Netherlands	Sweden	Thailand
Population II										
Schools	42	–	47	71	–	44	62	91	97	40
Teachers	105	–	248	187	–	70	126	146	492	310
Students	725	–	1110	2164	–	1096	809	2098	2454	1957
Population IV										
Schools	54	80	59	73	46	20	18	52	81	15
Teachers	174	265	360	299	118	52	37	64	503	142
Students	1485	2314	1379	2369	1063	614	329	1568	1767	936

Note that this table contains unweighted numbers; that is, the number refers to the actual number of cases occurring in a sample.
Dashes (–) indicate that no sample was represented.
Source: Lewis & Massad (1975) Table 2.3

To do this an International Committee was formed for each subject and a National Committee in each country taking part.

The International Committee [3)] then formulated attitude and descriptive scales and tests of achievement. Questionnaires were administered to students, teachers and headmasters. The results of these questionnaires were then grouped in five blocks and regression analyses were carried out using English reading and listening as criteria (Lewis & Massad 1975). Block 1 represented home circumstances and sex; Block 2: type of school and programme; Block 3: time factors; Block 4: school-related variables such as teachers' perceived skill in English; Block 5: kindred variables such as students' aspirations in English achievement and exposure to English.

The results of these regression analyses point strongly towards certain factors influencing school achievement in English more than others.

The Tests in English Achievement

For a resumé of the state of English Language Testing at the time, see Dunlop (1975) The Rationale for the construction of the tests is given below:

1 With so many countries to take into account, it was not possible to base the tests on a contrastive analysis of the various mother tongues and English as apart from the inordinate length of time such tests would take to prepare, the tests would not then provide the basis needed for comparison of achievement as between countries.

2 The National Committee in each country was asked which variety of English they would prefer to have tested: American or English. The National Committees decided in favour of British English and this was adopted accordingly as the language for the tests.

3 Because of the number of participating countries and their different criteria for selection of vocabulary and structures for teaching purposes, it was not possible to select the vocabulary and structures to be tested at each level by reference to any one country's system of selection as this would have placed the other countries at a disadvantage. Further, there is no internationally recognised body of structures or vocabulary for English which can be used as a standard to measure achievement at certain levels.

The Committee therefore decided to work pragmatically, using the broad experience of the International Committee corrected by the feedback from National Centres, in order to select the structures and vocabulary to be tested. Moreover, as the number of structures and the amount of vocabulary would in any case have to be limited (as neither every structure nor every word taught at each level could be tested in the time available) a sample of structures and vocabulary would in any case have to be selected and the feedback from the pre-testing of a very large number of items was then used to help finalise the sample of vocabulary and structures included in the final test instruments.

4 In order to allow incremental studies to be made; and to facilitate the comparison of between-country achievement at different levels (e.g. how does Population II Chile compare with Population II Sweden); and to make certain that lower-achieving countries would not find the Population IV Tests impossibly difficult, it was decided to include a number of Population II items in the Population IV tests. (NOTE: Population II = 14 year olds; Population IV = last year of secondary school)

In some of the tests this has meant that the top range of ability is not sufficiently catered for, but it should be remembered that the Production Tests in Speaking Fluency and Writing (Composition) give the more able pupils the chance to show their ability. Further, National Additional Tests are allowed, if countries wish to arrange them, so that further studies with additional items (in for example, Listening Comprehension or Structural Control in Speech) are possible.

5 The difficulties of securing exact equivalence as between countries in a passage to be translated from the mother tongue caused the Committee to exclude the possibility of translation in the tests and it was decided not to use the mother tongue in the tests except for the test instructions.

6 In order to avoid cultural bias as between countries and continents it was felt that as far as possible the content of the tests should not reflect an intimate knowledge of English or American life but should reflect a common cultural basis, that necessary to achieve ordinary communication. In spite of this hope, however, the choice of, for example, Reading Passages for Comprehension must necessarily reflect a more Western than Eastern culture.

7 In order to obtain an overall picture of countries' achievement, it was decided to test the four skills:

Reading Comprehension
Listening Comprehension
Writing Production
Speech Production

These four main headings were then divided into sub-sections as can be seen from the brief description of the tests given below.

8 In the construction of the tests it was decided to use Multiple Choice questions to test Comprehension and Open-Ended questions to test production following the reasoning that comprehension can be tested by Recognition but that Production necessarily requires further or other motor responses.

Description of Tests

RECOGNITION

A Reading

Population II

Section I	Recognition of Antonyms
Section II	Letter-Sound Correspondences
Section III	Recognition of Structural Features
Section IV	Vocabulary Recognition
Section V	Reading Comprehension: Short Sentences
Section VI	Reading Comprehension: Continuous Passages

Population IV

Section I	Recognition of Word Stress
Section II	Collocations
Section III	Recognition of Grammatical Structures
Section IV	Reading Comprehension: Short Sentences
Section V	Reading Comprehension: Continuous Passages

B Listening

Population II

Section I	Discrimination of Sounds
Section II	Listening Comprehension: Sentences or Short Paragraphs
Section III	Dictation

Population IV

Section I	Discrimination of Sounds
Section II	Recognition of Meaning through Intonation
Section III	Listening Comprehension: Sentences or Short Paragraphs
Section IV	Listening Comprehension: Conversation

PRODUCTION

C Writing

	Population II
Sections I & II	Tenses and Structures
Section III	Word Order
Section IV	Composition

	Population IV
Sections I & II	Tenses and Structures
Section III	Word Order
Section IV	Composition

D Speaking

	Population II
Section I	Structural Control
Section II	Oral Reading
Section III	Fluency

	Population IV
Section I	Structural Control
Section II	Oral Reading
Section III	Fluency

For a description of sampling methods, see Peaker (1975) and for the reliabilities and scoring of the tests, see Lewis & Massad (1975). Reliabilities in the tests were, on the whole, satisfactory, so were inter-rating reliabilities of scorers.

Results of the tests

In considering the results, again, it must be remembered that they are of interest as regards input (in terms of e.g. teaching methods, length of course of study, and students' aspirations) as compared to outcomes (i.e. achievement in English)

With this in mind the following results are of interest (again it must be remembered that not all countries took part in all tests):

Table 2 - Population II

Rank order of countries in the Four Skills (- : means did not take part)

Country	Reading	Listening	Writing: Tenses, Structures and Word Order	Writing: Composition (Carroll weighting)	Total speaking (Carroll weighting)
Netherlands	1	-	-	-	-
Sweden	2	1	1	2	1
FRG	3	-	-	-	-
Israel	4	-	-	-	-
Belgium(Fr.)	5	2	2	1	2
Italy	6	4	3	4	4
Thailand	7	-	-	-	-
Finland	8	3	4	3	3

This should be compared with the amount of time spent in learning English. Lewis states: "The factors that stand out across countries as important predictors of success appear to be Time, Classroom Practice and Student attitude and aspiration" (Lewis & Massad 1975). In the French study, Carroll states: "learning a foreign language is a cumulative process in which each year's work builds upon what has been learned before. Level of achievement is therefore largely a function of time" (Carroll 1975).

In both cases, however, we must say what Time is. It is not merely the number of years a student studies a language as the table below shows:

Table 3 Rank Order of Countries for Hours and Years Exposure, to English (the Country with the Greatest Number being Shown as 1 in Each Case), Population II

Country	Hours of English		Years of English	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Thailand	803	1	4.1	4
FRG	562	2	4.9	2=
Israel	551	3	4.9	2=
Belgium (Fr.)	365	4	2.9	8
Sweden	360	5	5.0	1
Italy	354	6	3.5	5
Netherlands	302	7	3.4	6
Finland	266	8	3.1	7

Source: Dunlop 1975

15

The same can be shown by comparing countries' results in rank order with hours and years spent on English, in the next two tables:

Table 4

Rank order of Countries in all Four Skills, Population IV (- : means did not take part)

Country	Reading	Listening	Writing: Tenses, Structures and Word Order	Writing: Composition (Carroll weighting)	Total speaking (Carroll weighting)
Netherlands	1	-	-	-	-
FRG	2	-	-	-	-
Sweden	3	1	2	2	1
Finland	4	2	1	2	3
Israel	5	-	-	-	-
Belgium(Fr.)	6	3	3	3	5
Italy	7	5	4	5	4
Hungary	8	4	5	4	2
Thailand	9	-	-	-	-
Chile	10	6	6	6	6

It can be noted that, as in Population II, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany both scored well on Reading but did not take part in other tests; this perhaps is a reflection on the amount of time spent in those two countries (N.B. 1971) on that particular skill.

Table 5 Rank Order of Countries for Hours and Years Exposure to English, Population IV

Country	Hours of English		Years of English	
	Number	Rank	Number	Rank
Thailand	1842	1	8.1	3
FRG	1074	2	8.7	2
Israel	978	3	7.6	4
Finland	772	4	7.4	5
Sweden	648	5	9.0	1
Hungary	594	6	4.0	10
Netherlands	549	7	6.1	6
Italy	548	8	5.0	9
Chile	497	9	5.6	7
Belgium (Fr.)	482	10	5.4	8

Source: Dunlop 1975

16

It should be noted that in the case of Hungary, differing "lines" of pupils have differing amounts of English per week; the figure given therefore would only apply to Hungarian pupils taking the "Special English Line" and is therefore the maximum number of hours that Population IV Hungarian pupils could be expected to study in English.

We see that, as for Population II, Sweden appears to have done better than all other countries, if all four skills are taken into account, and has more years of English than all others but also has fewer hours than approximately half the other countries. Moreover, from the teachers' questionnaires it can be seen what proportion of time is spent on each skill in the classroom (in the perception of the teacher): Swedish teachers answering as follows:

Note: grundskolan = the Swedish Comprehensive School (to age 16)
fackskolan = the (then) non-academic Continuation School (to age 18)
gymnasium = upper stages of the grammar school (to age 19)

Table 6 Percentage of Total Teaching Time Given to Practising Different Skills at Each Grade Level, in Teachers' Perception

(Percentages rounded to whole numbers) Source: NBE questionnaire Item 3a.	*grundskolan*			*fackskolan*		*gymnasium*		
Grade:	7	8	9	1	2	1	2	3
Reading (both extensive and reading aloud)	15 %	15 %	16 %	19 %	19 %	18 %	20 %	22 %
Writing (both guided writing practice and free writing)	17 %	18 %	17 %	14 %	16 %	14 %	14 %	14 %
Listening (Listening Comprehension: longer passages)	11 %	11 %	11 %	11 %	10 %	10 %	11 %	11 %
Speaking (guided speech practice of the pattern practice type AND non-guided speech practice and conversation AND pronunciation practice, either chorally or individually)	31 %	29 %	27 %	28 %	27 %	28 %	28 %	28 %
TOTAL	74 %	73 %	71 %	72 %	72 %	70 %	73 %	75 %
Vocabulary (study)	8 %	8 %	7 %	7 %	8 %	8 %	8 %	7 %
Grammar (study)	8 %	8 %	10 %	9 %	8 %	10 %	9 %	6 %
Translation (from and into English)	12 %	11 %	12 %	13 %	14 %	12 %	11 %	12 %
TOTAL	28 %	27 %	29 %	29 %	30 %	30 %	28 %	25 %
GRAND TOTAL	102 %	100 %	100 %	101 %	102 %	100 %	101 %	100 %

Source: Dunlop 1975

Scherer and Wertheimer (1964) have pointed out that to learn a language skill pupils must practise it and this study seems to bear that out; however, it does not say **how long** one must practise a particular skill in order to achieve well in it. Nor does the IEA study bear out that Time alone is enough in learning a language. Time is important, but it seems that Time is not Years nor Hours (nor Hours of Homework) but a composite of these and to these must be added: Teachers' Competence in English and Classroom Practices.

In both Lewis & Massad (1975) and Carroll (1975), it is reported that how teachers perceive their own competence in the foreign language affects students' achievement. Carroll reports for French that "Teacher competence in the foreign language seems to be reflected best by teachers' reports of their degree of ability to speak the foreign language" *(ibid* p.277) while Lewis & Massad (*ibid* p.298)states, "With regard to classroom practice, the use of English in reading, writing and speaking seems to have a positive effect on achievement. It would appear that when students are placed in a classroom situation requiring substantial use of English, the students are likely to have a decided advantage over students in classrooms where the mother tongue prevails" Lewis & Massad note, however, that does not mean banning the mother tongue from the classroom entirely.

It is interesting to notice, too, in Classroom Practices that there is a certain correspondence between the use of audio-aids and results. In the Population IV Listening Comprehension, only Sweden and Finland produced reasonable results in the "global comprehension" part of the test i.e. Section III: Listening to sentences or Short Paragraphs and Section IV: Listening to Short Conversations. There were 8 items in each section and the results are given below and compared with the use of the tape recorder in the classroom:

Table 7 Rank Order of Countries for Global Comprehension and Use of Tape Recorder - Whole Class, Population IV

Country	Sect. III		Sect. IV		Use of tape recorder – whole class	
	Mean	Rank order	Mean	Rank order	% of teachers frequently using	Rank order
Sweden	5.4	1	6.5	1	95.1	1
Finland	4.2	2	5.0	2	57.0	3
Belgium	2.4	3	1.7	4	56.6	4
Hungary	2.1	4=	1.8	3	66.8	2
Italy	2.1	4=	1.6	5	8.8	6
Chile	0.2	6	-0.2	6	10.9	5

Source: Dunlop 1975

It is not suggested that using a tape recorder is the only factor in increasing ability to understand spoken English but it would appear to help (and we shall return to Listening Comprehension later). However, provision of tape recorders comes under the heading of Budgeting and we should see how different countries in the survey allocated resources to foreign language study and see if that is related to performance. The table below gives the figures:

Table 8 Percentages of Age Group at School and Studying English, Population IV; Percentage of School Budget for Foreign Language Instruction, Populations II and IV

Country	% of age grouping in school at Pop. IV level (estimated)	estimated % of Pop. IV students studying English	estimated % of annual school budget for foreign language instruction	
			Pop. II	Pop. IV
Belgium (Fr.)	33	87.1	–	–
Chile	16	97.6	–	10.1
FRG	9[a]	74.6	10.4	16.1
Finland	21	88.4	12.9	22.6
Hungary	28	35.6	–	17.5
Israel	–	92.8	7.6	9.8
Italy	16	67.7	10.2	7.9
Netherlands	13	98.2	16.9	16.3
Sweden	45	91.3	17.1	14.0
Thailand	10	93.6	13.1	8.5

a. "Population IV was defined by the FRG as only those students in the *gymnasium*. If the whole age group is considered some 30 % of the students are still at school."
Source: Lewis & Massad (1975) Table 6.3

It can be seen that Sweden has the highest "retentivity" of any country i.e. it retains the greatest proportion of students at the upper secondary school level; nevertheless Sweden's results compare very favourably with those of other countries which gives no support to the "more means worse" argument. However, the IEA study has also found that "Student aspirations and needs are shown to be important predictors of achievement in English" (Lewis & Massad 1975) as they are in French: "Our data...say.. that students who have high aspirations to learn foreign languages, and who see utility in doing so, make more progress than students who have lower degrees of motivation and interest" (Carroll 1975). Nevertheless, high motivation will not be the only factor in learning a language. Lewis & Massad (ibid p.297) have pointed out Home Background Factors play little part in EFL learning as it is the school that determines language learning and therefore the methods employed by teachers (and their attitudes) must be of great importance.

Methods of teaching EFL

Dunlop (1975) pointed out that as far as Sweden was concerned, at the time of the IEA study, Swedish teachers very seldom used an extreme Direct Method but that teachers of English chose aspects of differing methods to suit their perception of the academic ability of the class being taught; that is they tended to take a more cognitive approach with classes they judged to be capable of an academic approach: and conditioning and imitation approaches with those they judged to be less academic. It is suggested that this was helpful to the students, but that it is necessary to individualise teaching more and low achievers particularly would be helped by programmes of Mastery Learning (Bloom, 1971). In the French study, Carroll (*ibid.* 0.274) also points out that "a divergence between students' aims and the aims of the instruction made a significant difference in achievement" and that "The results suggest that the students make faster progress if they are placed in instruction that corresponds to their particular goals." Lewis & Massad (*ibid* p.297) support this for the English study with "whenever possible, the educational programme should reflect the various needs and aspirations of the students."

The IEA study should, at least, have laid to rest the idea that there is one "method" suitable to all ages and all categories and should have been used earlier to support, through its empitical results, the tendency towards individualisation in foreign language learning that has developed recently.

Language

Because the IEA English study was able to make international comparisons it was also helpful in showing that in Reading Comprehension, students of completely different language backgrounds made the same mistakes in comprehension. Lewis & Massad (*ibid* p.74) point out that "The same popular distractors tend to be selected by students speaking very different language far more often than they are differentiated by them". Dunlop (1975) carried out a Listening Comprehension Test based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe with Swedish "gymnasium" pupils, university students and teachers of English and found, in the same way, "that it is not native language interference that causes the choice of the wrong alternative and that unless there is comprehension of the subject matter the student will tend to choose an alternative that reflects either words or sounds (but not meaning) in the stem of the item".

Testing this Listening Comprehension Test against English school pupils Dunlop also found "that the control sample of native English speakers should be selected with some care and should probably be at a lower or earlier stage of development than that at which the foreign language learner is at the moment ..... a control group of native speakers should be most carefully selected not only by their stage of development at the

time (so that their choices of language are not immeasurably greater) but also with regard to the degree of attentiveness they would bring to the test situation".

Finally, the items in this Listening Comprehension Test which caused the most difficulty were **not** those where there was acoustic interference or a "heavy" accent on the part of the speaker, nor where the speed of speaker was fast: difficulty in this test was "caused by the complexity of language and that complexity should be defined as the unfamiliarity of words and phrases combined with the density of information load that each part of the utterance has to carry". Low redundancy combined with unfamiliar phraseology caused the most difficulty.

If further tests were carried out into the degree of difficulty caused by acoustic quality and speed of speech this would be helpful in establishing what authentic materials could be most easily used in teaching and testing at different levels of ability. For the moment, it can be suggested that for advanced learners, materials need not be discarded merely because of poor acoustic quality or fast speed of speech as long as the redundancy is high and the vocabulary load low.

Summary

By cross-national surveys and testing in English and French, IEA reports have shown in school achievement in those languages, that:

a teachers' self-perception of their own ability in the language they teach affects students' performance i.e. the higher the teachers' ability is in his/her self-perception the more favourable this is to student performance.

b the use of English (French) in the classroom favourably affects students' achievement.

c high student aspiration and needs improve student achievement

d home background factors play little part in students' achievement in foreign languages and it is therefore school factors together with students' aspirations) that determine performance.

e Time is an important factor in language learning but the amount of time needed to achieve goals is affected by, and can be shortened by attention to the factors mentioned above and by individualising instruction to suit students' needs and aspirations.

f there is no one "method" suitable to all age levels and abilities

g native language interference is not necessarily the cause of error in comprehension as speakers of many different languages make the same errors

h for listening comprehension tests, control groups of native speakers should be selected with care so that their choices in language are not too great (as compared to the target group) nor their attentiveness too low.

i in listening comprehension, it could be that the greatest difficulty (at least for advanced learners) is caused by low redundancy combined with unfamiliar phraseology.

Implications For Language Teaching

1 Every effort should be made to help non-native EFL teachers improve their command of and their confidence in their own English and in this way encourage them to use more English in the classroom.

2 School should improve students' aspirations by matching language instruction to their needs (which means discussing their needs and the perceived utility of English with them)

3 Individualised instruction through self-access and programmes of mastery learning could exist alongside class instruction if schools made library time available, together with individual cassette recorders for listening practice.

4 More research needs to be carried out into listening comprehension using authentic materials of the type suggested by the Council of Europe and authentic listening materials (together with worksheets) need to be made available to schools through the BBC and the British Council to help give an impetus to the type of individualised instruction mentioned above.

Notes

1 IEA is the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement whose Chairman at the time of the Six Subject Survey was Professor Torsten Husen. The Executive Director was Professor T N Postlethwaite who is the present Chairman of IEA.

2 See *The International Impact of Evaluation* (Husen) in The Sixty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Chicago 1969.

3 The International English Committee consisted of the following members: E Glyn Lewis (Chairman), Ian Dunlop, Esther Heitner, Pierre Morette, Agnes M Niyekawa-Howard, Rauno Piirtola, Clifford H Prator.

4 See the reports of the Ostia Conference (1966) and the Sundsvall Conference (1969), both held under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

REFERENCES

Bloom, Benjamin (1971) Mastery Learning, In: Block, James (ed.) *Mastery Learning.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 47-63.

Carroll, John B (1975) *The Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in Eight Countries.* Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell. New York: John Wiley.

Dunlop, Ian (1975) *The Teaching of English in Swedish Schools.* Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell.

International Association for the Evaluation of educational Achievement (IEA) Brochure (1970), October.

Lewis, Glyn E & Massad, Carolyn (1975) *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries.* Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, New York: John Wiley.

Peaker, Gilbert (1975) *An Empirical Study of Education in Twenty-One Countries: A Technical Report.* Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell. New York: John Wiley.

Scherer, A C & Wertheimer M (1964) *A Psycholinguistic Experiment in Foreign Language Teaching.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

©Tables in this article reprinted from *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries* by G Lewis and C Massad and *The Teaching of English in Swedish Schools* by I Dunlop: Publisher: Almqvist and Wiksell International, Sweden.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS DEVELOPED FOR THE IEA INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE*

Carolyn Emrick Massad, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541, USA

Introduction

In 1965 the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) initiated a cross-national study of achievement in six subjects: science, reading comprehension, literature, civics education, and French and English as foreign languages. The purpose of the Six-Subject Survey was not to make a simple comparison of the achievements of different countries but to draw inferences about the ways in which factors in the individual student, in the school, and in the community promote or retard educational achievement. From such inferences, assuming they could be validly made, it was hoped that important implications for educational policy and practice could be derived.

Although over twenty countries were involved in the IEA Six-Subject Survey, only ten participated in the study of English as a foreign language: Belgium (French Region), Chile, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Thailand.

An International Committee on English as a Foreign Language was appointed by the IEA Council. It began its work as early as November 1966 and spent over four years in designing and developing appropriate achievement and other measures. Besides E Glyn Lewis (Wales) who served as Chairman of the Committee and primary investigator in the study[1], the members of the Committee have been Ian Dunlop (Sweden), Esther Heitner (Israel), P Morette (France, Agnes Niyakawa-Howard (USA).

---

* A complete report of the study was prepared and published: E Glyn Lewis and Carolyn E Massad, *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries.* Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell and New York: John Wiley, 1975.

1 Professor Lewis carried out the challenging and difficult task of guiding the study from its initiation in 1965 through the preparation and publication of the report in 1975. The writer began her involvement in the study in 1972 during her tenure as a Spencer Foundation Fellow at the University of Stockholm. She was involved primarily in supervising the processing of the statistical data and helped in interpreting the results and preparing the final report.

Rauno Piertola (Finland), and Clifford H Prator (USA). The International Committee was supported by, and worked in close cooperation with, National English Committees in each of the participating countries. The actual administration of the study (including selection of samples, collection and processing of data and the statistical analysis) was performed by the IEA organization with the help of the National Centres, researchgroups in the participating countries. Beginning in 1971, the National Centres administered the achievement tests and other instruments to nearly 30,000 students. Scoring the tests and preparing all of the data for analysis took place in the period between 1971 and 1973.

Test Design Considerations

Because the overall design of the IEA Six-Subject Survey was oriented to relating various factors to achievement, the achievement measures were only one element in the investigation and their constitution was determined and limited as much by the overall design as by the requirements of language testing *per se*. At the time that the IEA study was initiated, the changes that had been introduced into second and foreign language pedagogy had been influenced more by developments in psychology and linguistics than by sociological considerations. Granted, the influence of the home, community and a country's social and economic aims have generally figured in discussions concerning the curriculum as a whole (the Macro-structure) but they have not figured so prominently in thinking about the teaching of specific subjects (the micro-structures). It was felt that the IEA research might contribute to an understanding of sociological factors involved in the teaching and learning of English.

Target Populations. Consistent with the other five IEA studies in the Six-Subject Survey, several distinct populations at specified age or educational levels were sampled in order to draw conclusions about factors accounting for differences in achievement among students, among schools, or among countries. However, unlike the other IEA studies, the populations in the foreign language studies were necessarily restricted to students who had actually studied the language or were studying it at the time of testing. The specific populations defined for the English study were:

Population II	-	students aged 14.0 to 14.11 in full-time schooling currently studying English
Population IV	-	students in the pre-university year in full-time schooling who were currently studying English or had studied it for at least two years
Population IVs	-	a subpopulation of Population IV consisting of students who were specializing in English

Population I, students aged 10.0 to 10.11 in full-time schooling, was excluded from the English study since a large enough sample of these students who had studied English for at least 18 months was not identified in the participating countries. Population III was included at the discretion of each participating country and variously defined by the National Centres for their own purposes. Every country participating in the English study did not sample at all population levels.

Of course, the definition of these populations had implications for the levels of proficiency that the tests should be constructed to measure. To provide sufficiently reliable and valid measures, separate batteries of tests were required for each level although there was some overlap among levels. This overlap was desirable to obtain a degree of meaningfulness of test results across populations. Furthermore, a fairly wide range of test item difficulty was provided at each level because students sampled from a given population might actually represent a rather wide range of proficiency.

Practical Considerations. Because of the large number of schools and students involved, together with the fact that many schools would be testing in more than one subject, it was desirable to keep the total testing time in English as short as possible while still maintaining satisfactory test reliabilities and minimizing the effect of any speededness in the tests. Time limits and pacing of items were set so as to provide the student with a reasonable amount of time to enable him or her to attempt every item.

Unquestionably, the testing of English as a foreign language presented special problems. While tests of reading skill could be patterned on multiple-choice paper-and-pencil formats, tests of listening and speaking skills might well involve the use of tape recording equipment, for one thing, to maintain a standardized test administration across countries for testing listening and, secondly, to obtain tape-recorded student responses for testing speaking so that comparable, reliably scored data from different countries could be obtained through a central scoring process. Moreover, certain kinds of writing measures, like the IEA English study's directed composition test, call for a central scoring process for the same reasons the tape-recorded student responses would. Despite these special problems, the International English Committee decided to specify the use of tape recordings in the Listening and Speaking measures and to prescribe central scoring of student response in the Speaking and Writing tests wherever subjective judgement had to be made.

But wherever it seemed reasonable to do so, the battery of English tests used objective techniques (i.e., selecting from among a number of presented alternatives, as in multiple-choice tests or true-and-false tests). Although objective testing techniques were not commonly used in some

participating countries, previous IEA studies indicated that students readily adapted themselves to this format. Therefore, it was felt that "test-wiseness" on the part of those familiar with objective testing would not cloud the overall results of the study. As it developed, in the present study, the correlations between scores on objective measures and scores on free-response measures are frequently so high and positive that it is difficult to believe that the type of measure made any practical difference in the results.

Also of some import to the design of the achievement tests was the fact that they were to be international in nature in order to enable comparisons to be made across countries and across a variety of mother tongues. Therefore, it was decided to develop one battery of achievement tests for use across all participating countries. That is to say, although it was recognised that this study might provide an excellent testing ground for hypotheses relevant to contrastive linguistics, to have developed tests based on the principle of "contrasting pairs" would have meant a different test for each country thereby defeating the international intent of the study. Furthermore, it was felt that the data to be obtained by the international measures might lend themselves to study from the standpoint of contrastive analysis. In fact, the study did include a review of information about the incidence of certain types of errors and the influence of the native tongue as one source of such errors.

Another concern related specifically to the vocabulary and grammatical structures to be selected for the test items. In the case of English, there are several major organizations in several countries concerned with the promotion of English abroad as well as at least two major variants of the language - British and American - with their norm differences. Because of this situation, there is disparity among course designers and text writers regarding the vocabulary and structures of English. For this reason, the International Committee adopted an empirical approach: the observations of the National Centres on the linguistic content of the items were to be invited and the materials modified so that the vocabulary and grammatical structures would reflect a consenses.

Initial Test Development Steps

Since the tests were to be international in nature, the International English Committee developed very general test specifications for review by the National Centres. These are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Specifications

Level of Integration	Kind of Channel	Decoding	Encoding
Level 1	Auditory-vocal	Identification and discrimination of sounds	Pronunciation, intonation, and stress
	Visual-kinetic	Identification and discrimination of letters	Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
Level 2	Auditory-vocal	Recognition of letters, words, and sentence patterns	Active vocabulary; production of grammatical units
	Visual kinetic		
Level 3	Auditory-vocal	Auditory comprehension	Speaking
	Visual-kinetic	Reading comprehension	Writing

In addition, a *pro forma* was issued to the National Centres and they were invited to use it to indicate their teaching objectives and their respective relative importance. Table 2 shows the objectives included in the *pro forma* and the rank ordering of the objectives as reflected by an approximate concensus among all countries. A declining scale from one to six is used for the major categories of objectives and a similarly declining scale from a to g is used for the subordinate objectives.

TABLE 2

Objectives for English

Objectives	Population II	Population IV
Listening	2	2
- Understanding spoken English in general	a	a
- Understanding different varieties of English	c	c
- Understanding different registers—formal and conversational	b	b
Speaking	3	3
- Speaking English generally	a	a
- Speaking different varieties	c	c
- Speaking different registers	b	b
Reading	1	1
- Reading for information at various levels, such as news items or science	a	a
- Reading at different levels of abstraction	c	b
- Reading for pleasure—literature at various levels of formality	e	c
- Reading quickly	d	d
- Reading short extracts intensively	b	c
Writing	4	4
- Simple sentences	a	g
- Informal writing—recording a conversation	f	d
- Formal, e.g. a business letter	d	e
- Reproducing and summarizing	e	b
- Free composition—description, narrative, and exposition	c	a
- Frequent practice in writing	g	f
- Writing to instill accuracy	b	c
Knowledge about English	6	6
- History of the language	d	d
- English literature	a	a
- English history	b	b
- Acquaintance with the English way of life	c	c
Developing favourable attitudes	5	5
- To the English language	a	a
- To English-speaking peoples	b	b
- To English culture and institutions		
Status of English in the curriculum		
- As an academic study		
- As a practical study		

29

As a result of the responses from the National Centres, certain decisions affecting the development of the tests were made and these are indicated below.

Phonology The Listening and Speaking tests would assess the student's acquaintance with the sound system of English, including segmental units such as vowels and consonants as well as intonation. Phonological elements would be tested as parts of meaningful stimuli and not in isolation. In accordance with the views expressed by all the National Centres, the model to be used would be British rather than American English.

Writing Students would be tested for their ability to understand Roman script and English orthography. In addition to measures calling for the completion of written context through free response and multiple-choice formats, a directed composition would be included.

Grammar Students would be tested for their ability to understand and use grammatical signalling devices, such as inclectional affixes, word order and functional operatives in simple and complex contexts.

Vocabulary The range of the student's vocabulary, both active and passive. would be tested in context.

Literature and Culture The desirability of testing knowledge about the English language, English literature and its related culture and history would be determined by the consensus of the participants. However, whether knowledge of English literature were tested or not, it was proposed that questionnaires be used to obtain information about such questions as attitude toward English and student aims or purposes for studying the language.

The Language Proficiency Tests

An overview of the final IEA English Proficiency Tests is shown in Table 3.

The Reading and Listening tests were key areas in the IEA study and were administered to large samples. Because of the difficulties inherent in the administration of the Speaking tests and the central scoring of both the Speaking and Writing measures, these tests were administered only to small subsamples of the population samples.

Listening Tests The Listening tests were constructed at two different levels of difficulty so as to be appropriate for the two populations sampled, Populations II and IV. The stimulus material-- spoken words, sentences, or conversations-- were recorded on tapes. In every case, the student had a printed test booklet containing additional materials on which he or she was to base an answer. These materials included pictures or sets of alternatives printed in English.

30

TABLE 3

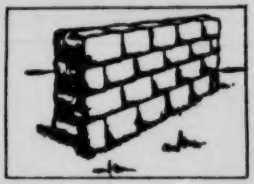
Overview of the IEA English Proficiency Tests

Population II				Population IV			
Type	Description of Items*	No.	Max. Score	Type	Description of Items*	No.	Max. Score
Listening				Listening			
Section 1	Discrimination of sounds	12	12	Section 1	Discrimination of sounds	12	12
Section 2	Comprehension of sentences	12	12	Section 2	Intonation	8	8
Section 3	Dictation		12	Section 3	Listening comprehension	8	8
				Section 4	Listening coinprehension	8	8
Reading				Reading			
Section 1	Recognition of antonyms	6	6	Section 1	Recognition of word stress	8	8
Section 2	Recognition of pronunciation	8	8	Section 2	Collocations	8	8
Section 3	Grammatical structures	10	10	Section 3	Grammatical structures	8	8
Section 4	Definition of the meaning of words	6	6	Section 4	Comprehension--short sentences	11	11
Section 5	Reading comprehension--short sentences	14	14	Section 5	Comprehension--continuous text	25	25
Section 6	Reading comprehension--continuous texts	16	16				
Writing				Writing			
Section 1	Grammatical structures	13	13	Section 1	Grammatical structures--miscellaneous	13	13
Section 2	Grammatical structures			Section 2	Grammatical structures		
(a)	Pronouns	2	2	(a)	Pronouns	2	2
(b)	Plurals	3	3	(b)	Plurals	3	3
(c)	Tenses	3	3	(c)	Tenses	3	3
(d)	Voice	2	2	(d)	Voice	2	2
Section 3	Word Order	8	8	Section 3	Word Order	8	8
Section 4	Directed Composition	1	**	Section 4	Directed Composition	1	**
Speaking				Speaking			
Section 1	Grammatical structures with pictures	12	12	Section 1	Grammatical structures with pictures	12	12
Section 2	Oral Reading	1	30	Section 2	Oral Reading	1	30
Section 3	Fluency	1	**	Section 3	Fluency A	1	**
				Section 4	Fluency B	1	**

31

In addition to a word recognition measure (Section 1) and a sentence comprehension measure (Section 2), Population II had a dictation test of 112 words (Section 3). Population IV had the same word recognition measure as Population II (Section 1), a measure of the ability to recognize the difference in meaning of two sentences identical except for the intonation pattern (Section 2), a measure of the ability to comprehend and draw inferences from a single sentence or short passage (Section 3), and a measure of the ability to interpret the drift of a conversation (Section 4).

The word recognition measure (Section 1) required the student to identify which of three spoken words corresponded to a picture of a simple object. For example, the picture below was in the test booklet and the words on the tape were *wall*, *ball* and *fall*:



In this case, the initial consonant (*w* in *wall*) was to be distinguished; also tested were vowels (e.g., *cut*, *coat*, *caught*) and final consonants (e.g., *cat*, *cap*, *cab*). All words for these items were monosyllables.

An example of a sentence comprehension item (Section 2 for Population II) involved the student hearing the taped voice say:

> Charles is having a party today to celebrate his sixth birthday. How old is Charles? (Pause)

and answering the question by choosing the correct alternative in the test booklet:

* A Six years old.
B Sick.
C Six boys and girls.

For popular IV, a sentence comprehension item (Section 3) involved the taped sentence:

> If we had known we could have ridden we would have gone.

and the alternatives printed in the test booklet were:

32

A We went.
* B We did not go.
C We knew that we could go.

Section 4 of the Population IV Listening Test consisted of taped simple and short conversations between a man and woman, such as:

Woman: I wonder why everybody should have to take mathematics.
Man: Because everybody needs it, I suppose.

for which the student was asked to identify the drift of the conversation from among alternatives in the test booklet:

* A Bill thinks that mathematics is a useful subject.
B Ann thinks that mathematics is a useful subject.
C Ann and Bill both think that mathematics is a useful subject.

Estimates of the test reliabilities for the Listening tests were obtained using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, an internal consistency reliability formula. For the Population II Listening Test, the country reliabilities range from .83 to .96 and the median value is .94. For the Population IV Listening Test, the country reliabilities range from .67 to .84 and the median value is .75. Generally speaking, the Listening tests were relatively reliable. Even in the case of moderate or low reliabilities, the tests were considered appropriate for comparing group means whereas comparing individuals would not be justified.

Reading Tests. The Reading measures were composed of various types of multiple-choice items. As in the Listening tests, it was intended that there be a wide range of item difficulty in the test for each population.

The Population II Reading test contained a section on antonym recognition (Section 1), a measure of the ability to recognize the pronunciation of written words (Section 2), a multiple-choice sentence completion measure to test the ability to produce a correct grammatical structure (Section 3), a vocabulary test concerned with defining words in context (Section 4), and two measures of reading comprehension - the first (Section 5) dealing with interpreting simple sentences and the second (Section 6) containing passages of continuous prose each of which was followed by four questions related to the passage.

Five sections comprised the Population IV Reading test. Included was a measure of the ability to recognize the correct pronunciation of the printed words by identifying which words in a given set of words had the same stress pattern (Section 1), a test of the ability to appropriately relate adjectives to nouns by identifying in each item the one noun in a set of nouns that would be inappropriate to use with a given adjective (Section 2), a multiple-choice sentence completion test to measure the ability to produce correct grammatical structures (Section 3), and two

measures of reading comprehension - the first (Section 4) designed to test comprehension of fairly simple sentences but involving the abilities to paraphrase and make inferences and the second (Section 5) containing passages of continuous prose followed by five or six questions requiring ability to identify details, interpret words in context, and interpret the material.

Some examples of items in the Reading tests are given below.

Is your friend a *fat* boy? No, he is _____.

A round.
B short.
* C thin.
D large.
E tall.

This is an item from Section 1, Recognition of Antonyms, in the Population II Reading Test.

Another item in the Population II test required the student to identify the alternative possessing the specified (underlined) sound in even:

even

A end.
B help.
C get.
D eye.
* E me.

The Population IV test, like that for Population II, included items designed to assess the student's ability to recognize correct pronunciation of the printed word. Whereas for Population II the problem posed was sound-letter correspondence, for Population IV word stress was the problem. Students were asked to indicate which words had the stress on the same syllable:

(i) rea-son-a-ble
(ii) en-ter-tain-ment.
(iii) de-liv-er-y.

A i and ii are the same.
B i and iii are the same.
C ii and iii are the same.
D all are the same.
* E none are the same.

A Population II item measuring grammatical structures is:

We have studied English _____ 1964.

* A since.
B for.
C from.

An item from Collocations, Section 2 of the Population IV measure, required the student to identify which of the five listed nouns could **not** be associated with the adjective given:

Smart

A child.
* B flower.
C trick.
D people.
E dress.

As for Listening tests, the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 was used for estimating test reliabilities. For Population II, the country reliabilities range from .87 to .95 and the median value is .93. For Population IV, the country reliabilities range from .68 to .91 and the median value is .84.

Speaking Tests. The Speaking measures were the same for both populations sampled except that for Population IV the measure of fluency was extended by the addition of free response items (Section 4). Included in the Speaking tests were a measure of structural control requiring the student to respond to tape-recorded questions, statements or instructions by relating the response to the appropriate picture in the test booklet (Section 1), a test of oral reading in which the student read aloud simple prose that included conversation (Section 2), and a measure of fluency that required the student to describe in English the events set out in a series of pictures (Section 3). For Population IV only, the fluency measure included a section requiring the student to describe the events related to what happened before, during and after a party scene presented in one picture (Section 4).

35

Following is an item from Section I dealing with structural control. The student saw in the test booklet:

and heard:

"Is there a chair in the room?"

Acceptable student responses were:

"Yes, there is a chair in the room."
"Yes, there's a chair in the room."
"Yes, there is."

For Section 2, Oral Reading, the student was told that he or she would be assessed for the accuracy of pronunciation and the quality of phrasing. At the end of the three minutes allowed for familiarization with the text, the student recorded the oral reading. The scorers had copies of the printed text in which the features included specified vowels and consonants as well as phrasing and intonational features. In the following extract, the pronunciation items are underscored with a line and the phrasing features by a dotted line.

He turned to his wife. "What do you think?" he asked.
....

A wrong pronunciation of the underscored word or poor phrasing of the intonation feature lost a point.

An example of a set of pictures used for Section 3, Fluency is shown here:

Of the two sets of pictures available, the student was informed that the score on this section would be based on the amount and quality (accuracy of grammar and pronunciation) of the response, range and suitability of vocabulary, and the variety of grammatical features used. The student was encouraged to say at least three sentences about the picture sequence he or she chose to describe. No time limit was imposed.

The second part of the fluency measure (for Population IV only) tested the same aspects of English achievement as the first part but was intended to be more difficult.

The tapes results of the Speaking tests were scored at the National Foundation for Educational Research (London) under the direction of Dr Clare Burstall. The variables involved in the scoring process included giving a Global Rating *[scaled 0 (low) to 4 (high)]* over all aspects of the Speaking test as well as scoring for Number on Intelligible Clauses; Accuracy of Grammar, Vocabulary and Pronunciation; Variety of Tense and Structure; and Range of Vocabulary.

No precise data are available concerning the reliabilities of the Speaking tests themselves, but of importance is the fact that the inter-rater reliabilities are satisfactory. That is to say, when two raters evaluated the same material, there was adequate consistency in the ratings. Of course, since the raters had been specifically trained to do the scoring, it was hoped that this would be the case.

Writing Tests. The same Writing measure was used for both populations sampled. The first three sections were structured responses and scoring was on a right or wrong basis. The fourth section required the student to produce a written composition of not more than 200 words on the subject of travel.

Section 1 and 2 required the student to correctly complete sentences in which a blank line was inserted where a word or group of words had been omitted. These were free responses; no alternatives were suggested. Examples of items from these sections with the correct responses given on the lines that were blanks in the test booklet are:

Do you know when America *was* discovered?

Denis is leaving the city *by* train.

Correct use of verbs and prepositions were tested (above) as well as pronouns:

Isn't your brother going out?

No, *he* isn't going out.

and the ability to make correct changes in number for nouns and pronouns:

She saw a policeman in that car.

She saw some *policemen* in *those* cars.

as well as changes in the tense of verbs:

I make a cake every Sunday.

I *made* a cake last Sunday.

and changes in voice:

The policeman asked Bill his name.

Bill *was asked* his name by the policeman.

Section 3 contained sentence completions also but the student was required to choose one of a set of alternatives presented for a response. This section was to test the ability to use correct word order. An example of the items follows:

These shoes are _____ _____ _____.

(i) enough (ii) for me (iii) big.

A i, iii, ii.
B ii, i, iii.
C ii, iii, i.
*D iii, i, ii.
E iii, ii, i.

For the written composition (Section 4), the only limit imposed on the student, in addition to the maximum numbers of words allowed, was that he or she should use twelve given words in any other and in any grammatical relationship. The variables involved in the scoring process included a Global Rating (scaled 0 (low) to 4 (high)); Volume, the number of intelligible clauses; Accuracy of Grammar, Vocabulary and Spelling; Variety of Tense and Structure; Range of Vocabulary; and Cohesiveness.

As in the case of the Speaking test, the inter-rater reliabilities for the Writing test are quite acceptable. Scorers of the Writing test had also been trained, as was the case for the Speaking test, and all scoring was done at the National Foundation for Educational Research (London) under the direction of Dr Clare Burstall.

Comments

This writer has presented the considerations that went into the design, construction, administration and scoring of the English proficiency tests used in the IEA study. The analyses contained in the full report of the study, *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries*, show that the tests were completely adequate for the purposes for which they were intended and valid for measuring English proficiency in all countries that participated in the study.

The reader of the full report may find the discussion of the analysis of student errors interesting and thought provoking. Essentially, errors appeared to arise from several sources. Although some errors may have been due to the characteristics of the languages the students already knew, neither a positive or negative distortion arising from the national languages could be confirmed. Reports from the National Centres would be better able to address this issue.

The tests described are available in microfiche or photocopy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia, 22210. U.S.A. Application for permission to use or adapt the English proficiency tests may be made to IEA, c/o Institute for the Study of International Problems in Education, University of Stockholm, FACK, S-106 91, Stockholm 50, Sweden.

LINGUISTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN POLISH SCHOOL LEAVERS - A DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

H Komorowska, Institute for School Curricula, Warsaw

This article is reproduced here by kind permission of *Glottodidactica* who are publishing the original version in Polish

The present article is a research report on factors accounting for the educational attainment of secondary school leavers after a four year obligatory course of English as a foreign language. The study was completed in 1977 and published in 1978 in the form of a book written in Polish and published by the Polish Educational Publishers, Warsaw: WSIP, 1978 the English equivalent of the Polish title is *Success and Failure in Foreign Language Acquisition* by H Komorowska.

Research objectives

The main objectives of the research project can be listed as attempts to arrive at conclusions pertaining to:

an evaluation of educational achievement in terms of both linguistic and communicative competence,

a diagnosis of variables connected with the individual person learner and the learning process,

a diagnosis of variables connected with the individual person teacher and the teaching process,

a diagnosis of environmental variables,

correlations of factors from the three groups above and the educational attainment studies,

hierarchies of factors accounting for success and failure in FL acquisition at a high school level.

This clarification of research objectives has been completed through the breakdown of compound variables into subvariables reflected in empirical, definitional and inferential indices.

Variables

1 Dependent variables

Two basic dependent variables have been distinguished within the educational attainment block viz. **linguistic** and **communicative** competence. Linguistic competence was defined as the learners' ability to produce and

understand grammatically well-informed sentences, while communicative competence was accepted as a term standing for the learner's ability effectively to communicate his intentions irrespective of whether grammatically well-formed or grammatically ill-formed sentences are used for the purpose.

The above approach to educational attainment in the field of modern languages is likely to facilitate the empirical verification of the underlying educational philosophy, since it is possible to find out the contribution both of audiolingual and cognitive theory to the development of grammatical correctness and of the communicative value of utterances through an analysis of correlations between them.

Linguistic competence was investigated at both the production and the recognition levels. Communicative competence was further divided according to the social role performed by the speaker into:

communicative competence in the role of a tourist and

communicative competence in the role of a guide to his home-country

Indices of educational achievement here were numbers of communicative language behaviours in a group of situations considered typical of each of the two roles. Each of these behaviours was to communicate one of the intentional categories and care was taken to preserve the relative proportions of the intentional categories according to both situation and social role.

2 **Independent variables**

Independent variables have been grouped in three blocks. They are:

variables involved in the learning process,

variables involved in the teaching process and

variables of home and school environment.

The first block contained four compound variables, i.e.

learner's attitudes,

his motivation,

frequency and type of his individual work and

the learner's subjective image of the teaching process.

Simple variables were then distinguished within each of the compound ones and the following list was arrived at,

learner's attitude towards the foreign language,

learner's attitude toward the FL speech community and its culture,

motivation underlying the choice of a FL out of three alternatives presented in the high school curriculum,

type of motivation on the instrumental/integrative continuum,

kind of motivation on the internal/external continuum,

source of motivation in terms of factors increasing and decreasing motivation,

time devoted to FL acquisition in the course of the out-of-school activities,

forms of individual work of FL acquisition,

personal opinions concerning the relative difficulty of FL chosen as a high school subject,

estimation of one's own language advancement against the average advancement of the group,

estimation of one's own capabilities and perspectives,

self-instructional know-how.

The second block was divided into two variables both of them of a compound nature, i.e.

the person of the teacher and

the teaching process,

the former being further divided into variables of

professional work,

pre-service training,

age and

sex,

the latter being broken down into

the teacher's approach to the hierachy of educational objectives,

proportions of time allotted for particular language skills at lessons,

teaching techniques with a special emphasis on the use of the mother tongue and grammatical commentary and exposition, the approach to learner's errors and the role of teaching aids,

evaluation techniques with regard to their frequency and form,

The third block of variables connected with home and school environment contained the following subvariables,

amount of education in parents,

the knowledge of the FL acquired by the learner in particular members of his family,

parental interest in the school acquisition of a foreign language,

access to tape-records, record-players, radios and TV sets,

school location,

school premises,

school FL equipment,

the teaching staff in terms of the student-teacher ratio and the number of FL teachers during a four-year course.

Research instruments

Research instruments can be roughly divided into those pertaining to **independent** variables and those pertaining to the **dependent** ones. Independent variables were sought by means of (a) an 80-question learner's questionnaire with answer grids of 5 to 8 alternatives, (b) a 40-question teacher's questionnaire with answer grids of 2 to 5 alternatives and (c) an observation card for the teachers' assessment of the categories of the sample.

Dependent variables were measured by means of three tests, (a) a **linguistic competence test,** (b) a **communicative competence test** and (c) a **free speech sample test.**

The linguistic competence test contained 50 items divided into two subtests of recognition and production abilities using multiple choice and completion techniques respectively. The linguistic competence test was constructed on the principle of the syllabus/handbook representation and could thus serve as a source of data pertaining to the acquisition of the teaching content.

The communicative competence test contained 50 items divided into two subtests of two social roles usually performed by the FL learner. Each item included a description of a situation calling for a particular language behaviour with a carefully chosen intentional category involved. No single satisfactory answer could thus be foreseen, as every category can be realised through a number of surface structures. Although 0-1 scoring was used throughout the whole of the linguistic competence test, it was decided to introduce 0-1-2-3 scoring in the communicative competence test. Three stood for both communicative and grammatically

well-formed utterances, 2 - for communicative but ill-formed utterances, 1 - for utterances communicating intentions other than the one called for by a given test item and 0 - for those neither communicative nor well-formed. The scoring described above at the same time constituted a coding system, with 1+3 standing for grammatically correct and 2+3 for communicative utterances. This way it was possible to separate data pertaining to the linguistic competence not only from the linguistic competence test but also from communicative competence test items. It should finally be noted that the communicative competence test was constructed on the principle of the sociolinguistic representation, i.e. we investigated communicative needs and not teacher presented behaviour in order to mirror the true preparation of students for the participation in a more or less natural verbal interaction.

The third test was a five-minute speech sample containing a monologue on a subject uniform to all of the students. We introduced 1-2-3-4-5 scoring with respect to pronunciation, vocabulary, linguistic competence, communicative competence and fluency. The global score arrived at through adding up all the five scales stood for the overall speaking skill of the learner. Here again additional data pertaining to both kinds of the language competence could be separated, which made it possible to draw conclusions about variation in the level of linguistic and communicative competence according to the type of test and to the type of utterance that had been elicited. Therefore, differences were analysed as between a grammatically structured and a sematically structured test in so far as they affected linguistic competence. Levels of communicative competence in dialogue and monologue as well as in long and short utterances were also considered. Moreover, it was possible to see how far pronunciation and vocabulary correlated with the kind of the language competence as well as to determine correlations between linguistic and communicative competence in various kinds of tests.

Sample

To comply with research objectives the sample had to include secondary school leavers aged 19 who end the obligatory four-year course of a Western foreign language. Thus the research embraced Grade IV students of the English course and covered 315 terminal class learners. A stratified random sample of student in the region of Warsaw was drawn at a 3% level in such a way as to arrive at a typological representation of all the Polish school FL settings at a 1% level.

In order to obtain a typological representation of FL school settings, an analysis had earlier been completed of the existing teaching arrangements with regard to

school location and

school quality.

Two basic groups were then distinguished according to school location viz those from urban and those from rural schools.

Two groups were also distinguished according to school quality as defined by the development of FL skills and the professional know-how in teachers. By combining groups according to both criteria four strata could thus be identified as follows:

high quality urban school
low quality urban schools
high quality rural schools and
low quality rural schools.

Random sampling of students in the former viovodship of Warsaw took place within each of the four strata to which schools had formerly been allotted on the basis of the location analysis, the so-called researcher observation cards and the school inspector's data.

The introduction of stratification considerations made it possible to arrive at the additional conclusions pertaining to factors contributing to the success in FL acquisition as well as to factors highly correlating with school failure.

Research proper was carried out three months before the school leaving examination and could thus cover the bulk of the curriculum content without interfering with the organization of major school events. A coding system was introduced in order to ensure the reliability of the data and insulate them from inspection by teachers and headmasters. Scoring was completed by one person only in order to ensure uniformity of the procedure.

Research results

1 **Linguistic competence in school leavers**

Data pertaining to linguistic competence have been dychotomized into satisfactory - unsatisfactory with 90% correct answers in the linguistic competence test as the dividing point.

Considering the relatively high level of requirements as well as the nature of the rest, which constituted a complete representation of the curriculum and the textbook content, the results obtained in the course of the four-year course seem mediocre, as only 55.9 per cent of the sample was found to fill in more than 90 per cent of the test correctly. A considerable difference was noted as between the urban and the rural group of students (61.5 to 49.3 per cent of satisfactory results). However, no visible discrepancy could be found in the educational attainment of students from high

and low quality school settings. One of the possible interpretations of this tendency is that emphasis given in the Polish curriculum to the formation of linguistic competence and to grammatical correctness makes the teacher organize the whole of the teaching process around syntactic structures to be acquired. Moreover, the number and variety of the grammatical exercises included in both teacher's and learner's books, tend to eliminate or at least reduce the effects of a teacher's professional training, the lesson procedure being very strongly structured for all the teachers irrespective of their abilities.

2 Communicative competence in school leavers

A complete analysis of the communicative competence test proved that 56.6 percent of the sample scored satisfactorily on items measuring the communicative value of utterances. As has already been noted, the test constituted a sociolinguistic representation of situations in which students are most likely to participate. It also contained a representation of communicative intentions most frequent in the two basic social roles to be performed by the FL user. Therefore, results obtained by school leavers seem to be astonishingly high, which is probably due to communicative transfer from the source language as well as to the consequent facilitation in FL acquisition.

Differences have been found in favour of urban schools, where the number of satisfactory results was about 14 per cent greater. Striking differences could be noted as between the group of student from low quality educational settings and those from schools taught by qualified teachers with an operative knowledge of the language. In some cases differences amounted to 25.3 per cent.

It seems worth pointing out that the teacher's professional skill seems much more important for the formation communicative competence than it is for the formation linguistic competence. This is so because abundant materials pertaining to the formation of grammatical correctness within the framework of the audio lingual approach do not require much creativity from the teacher. We have no precise data about the formation of communicative competence on the basis of those scarce materials pertaining to speaking skills and fluency within the frames of the cognitive code learning theory. These call for the teacher's initiative and pedagogical skill together with that knowledge of interpersonal relations indispensible to successful class communication on subjects interesting for the students. They also depend - last not least - on the teacher's personal attractiveness as a partner in class discussions or small talk.

3 Linguistic vs communicative competence

Research revealed a more or less similar level of the linguistic and communicative competence development in school leavers. Considering

46

the definitions of the two kinds of competence which have been adopted, the phenomenon of relative equality in competence seems extraordinary. It suggests that communicatively effective utterances do not outnumber grammatically correct ones. This points to an unusual emphasis on grammatical structures contrasting with a relatively slight interest in the communicative value of utterences; otherwise the communicative utterances would be in the great majority as happens in both L_1 and L_2 acquisition in course of natural exposure to language data.

In order to find out relations between the development of linguistic and communicative competence, a correlation between the two of them has been calculated in various types of texts elicited by the research instruments. In short dialogues the correlation amounted to 0.49. while in five-minute monologues it amounted to no more than 0.38. Since a number of various correlations were available from mutally controllable sources (see section 3 on research instruments above), it was possible to find out that differences with respect to correlation values did not exceed .05.

A correlation has also been sought between the level of communicative competence on the one hand and that of pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency on the other. It is interesting to note that fluency and vocabulary were found to be highly correlated with communicativeness [0.85 and 0.82], while pronunciation and grammatical correctness revealed fairly low indices [0.61 and 0.51]. All of the above-mentioned correlations were, however, considerably higher in monologues than they were in dialogues, which is probably due to reliability aspects connected with the length of the text elicited by the test item.

4 Learner variables

Attitudes toward the foreign language acquired have been found to be uniform throughout the sample and generally favourable with 93.6 per cent students declaring their willingness to continue the learning even after the abolition of the obligatory status of the FL in the high school. Attitudes toward the FL speech community tend to be considerably less favourable [79.8%], although certain methodological reservations can be claimed here. The avoidance of contact with any representatives of the FL speaking society might be deeply rooted in the fear of communicative failure rather than in hostility toward another social group.

Motivation was found to be a mixture of integrative and instrumental motives in far more cases than could be expected (81.0%). Moreover, a mixture of internal and external motives proved to be much more frequent than the manifestation of motivation induced purely by external fear and authority (86.8%). The most important internal motives for FL acquisition were tourism (49.8% students), the future professional work (25.7%), literary interests (10.6%) and pop music (5.5%) while among the external motives were school marks (49.8%) and the need to pass the entrance examination at the

university (27.7%). Among the factors hindering the development of motivation the most common seem to be monotonous lesson procedures (33.1%) and the content of textbooks and supplementary materials (25.7%).

An analysis of the organization of individual work at home showed that many of the students tend to dismiss oral work as unimportant. No more than 62.0 per cent of students were claimed to engage in the preparation of oral exercises systematically. One third of students claimed to undertake additional, non-obligatory activities connected with FL acquisition e.g. listening to FL broadcasts, viewing TV lessons of English or listening to Linguaphone courses. There are only 19.2% students who try to use the foreign language among themselves and thus practice some of the communication skills.

Learners tend to view the foreign language as a difficult school subject. More than half of them consider their own efforts to be definitely less than those of their colleagues. Failure is generally ascribed to speaking skills (50.0%) but success, to reading comprehension (55.3%). Preferences springing from the learners' perception of the future usefulness of the subject tend, however, to point out speaking skills as the most important (74.6%) and the reading skills as virtually useless (94%). Almost all of the students claim complete ignorance of self-instruction techniques. This is probably the main reason why individual work is usually neglected. Only 16 percent of students declared that they were not afraid of the necessity to continue the learning of the language after the end of the school course.

Generally speaking, the block of learner variables which seem to be of extreme importance for educational attainment presents a fairly satisfactory attitudinal and motivational picture with definite shortcomings in the field of more formal and organizational aspects of the learning process.

Environmental variables

School location is one of the most important of the environmental variables, since both parental profession and the learner's residence are highly correlated with the urban or rural categories of school.

Differences in the educational attainment revealed in urban and rural school students have already been discussed above. Here we are going to concentrate on variation in learner variables according to location differences.

As to motivating factors, aspiration to score higher on language tests seem much stronger in rural school learners (56.3 per cent rural students to 42.6 urban students). The role of tourism as a motivating factor decreases in the rural schools from 60 percent to 40 per cent, while the interest of students in reading foreign language texts considerably increases (from 6.5 to 15.5 per cent). It is worth pointing out that aspirations to be perceived as an intelligent and well-educated person, although insignificant in urban schools

tend to be conspicuous among rural students, amounting to more than 12 per cent of all the motivating factors in this particular stratum of the sample. On the other hand, the foreign language is not at all perceived as helpful in the future work, probably because of differences in the nature of the urban and rural school leaver's subsequent employment.

As to the organization of individual work, it has been noted that rural students are far more systematic and diligent in both written and oral exercises; half of the students in rural schools prepare their homework regularly or at least frequently as compared to no more than one third of the urban students.

The most conspicuous difference between the urban and the rural stratum of students lies in their pre-high-school contacts with the foreign language under examination. No more than 25 per cent rural students had been learning English before they entered high school, while more than half of the urban students were subject to some kind of English instruction. This, however, does not exert any particular influence on the level of linguistic and communicative competence at the end of the terminal grade, as only instruction lasting more than three years has been found statistically significant from the point of view of the educational attainment of school leavers. Therefore, although, the out-of-school language learning has a definite impact on the learning process in the first two grades of the high school, it affects the research results of no more than 9 per cent of students in the whole of the sample.

No differences have been found in the field of parents' interest in their children's educational achievement nor in the students access to radios, TV sets, record-players and tape recorders.

Location was found to correlate with the amount of language education in parents, as about two thirds of the urban students claimed a fairly good knowledge of the foreign language in their parents, while only one fourth of all the rural school leavers recorded any amount of the FL skills in their families.

In some cases, however, location of school in the rural area seems beneficial School premises in rural schools are more spacious, probably because of the much stronger interest of the rural population in forms of education alternative to the general secondary school, mainly in those combining general education with professional training. Equipment in the rural schools is also more varied, partly because of heavier budgeting on the part of the educational authorities, partly because of the teachers' sense of deprivation, which results in more efforts to modernize the educational process through more advanced educational technology. There is only one drawback which seems to be extremely difficult to overcome, vis. big language groups of 34-36 students. In no more than 25 per cent can small classes of 20-24

students be established, a phenomenon caused by constant lack of teachers eager to teach in rural schools.

6 Teacher variables

The present discussion will show basic variables connected with the person of the teacher and the teaching process, for the shortage of space does not permit us to include a huge number of subvariables which have been covered by the research.

The proportioning of lessons in both urban and rural schools favoured speaking skills and reading comprehension, which is in full accord with the hierarchy of educational objectives envisaged in the curriculum.

The teaching method is basically audiolingual and oriented to the formation of linguistic competence with the concomitant negative attitude towards error. 58.8 per cent of students state that grammatical correctness is far more important for their teachers than the ability to communicate in the foreign language, while 62.1 per cent point to the fact that lexical and syntactic elements are central to the process of instruction, language skills being neglected. It is interesting to note that focus on grammatical correctness prevails in rural schools, possibly because crowded classes do not permit any increase in oral exercises and conversation training.

Teaching techniques point to the audiolingual approach adopted by most of the teachers, which is demonstrated in the relative infrequency of references to the mother tongue as well as a scarcity of grammatical explanations. A cognitive approach seems to be favoured by rural rather than urban school teachers.

Evaluation procedures were found to be base on summative rather than formative approaches with prevailing paper and pencil techniques geared to the control of sentence patterns. The description above matches the declarations of more than half of the sample, but a less extreme picture emerges for the remaining group of teachers. Generally speaking, evaluation procedures are congruent with both teaching methods and classroom techniques and in the majority of cases seem to be favourable to linguistic rather than communicative competence.

7 Factors significant for educational attainment

One of the objectives of the research was to list factors the influence of which results in a statistically significant difference in the educational attainment of school leavers. All of the variables under examination have thus been tested for their significance from the point of view of both

linguistic and communicative competence. Let us consider **communicative competence** first.

Among the learner variables attitudes toward the foreign language as well as the motivational level turned out to be statistically significant. The following subvariables should be pointed out: the learner's willingness to continue FL learning even after the abolishing of the obligatory status of the FL aspirations to read fluently in the foreign language, integrative motives, and the internal type of the learner motivation. The organisation of individual work has also proved significant for the level of communicative competence, important subvariables being the systematic preparation of homework, and attempts to communicate in the foreign language in the course of peer group activities. The ability to carry out FL self-instruction has also been found statistically significant.

8 A hierarchy of factors underlying success in FL acquisition

Factors which had been found statistically significant for educational attainment were then ordered according to the degree of their relationship with linguistic and communicative competence. Let us first consider the hierarchy of factors underlying success in communicative competence formation.

According to contingency coefficient calculation, the strongest relationship was found between success and the learner variables, viz. the sense of achievement in the course of FL instruction (0.4447), the amount of time devoted to out-of-school contacts with the foreign language (0.3917), frequency of engaging in out-of-school contacts with the foreign language (0.3609), attempts to use FL in group activities (0.3607), ability to use self-instructional techniques (0.3554), internal (0.3114) and integrative motives (0.2325) and a favourable attitude toward the foreign language(0.2153). Thé second place was found to be occupied by the environmental block, its most important variable being small group instruction in the school environment (0.2103). Teacher variables seemed to be relatively less important for the level of communicative competence though two of them are worth mentioning, viz. stress on effective communication rather than on the well-formedness of sentences (o.1998) and the teacher's creativity in presenting new language exercises (0.1986).

As to **linguistic competence**, learner variables came at the top of the list as well although the number of significant variables here was very small as compared to communicative competence significant variable included sense of achievement (0.3814), frequency of individual work at home (0.3206) and knowledge of self-instructional techniques (0.2426). The second place was occupied by teacher variables, a huge number of which proved to be statistically significant. Let us name the most

important ones: introduction of sentence patterns at lessons (0.2249); stress on the elimination of errors from the learning process (0.2011); stress on paper and pencil testing techniques (0.1918); and focus on syntax in the evaluation procedures (0.1883).

Generally speaking, learner variables are top factors for both communicative and linguistic competence. It should however, be noted that **a considerably higher number of individual variables are significant for communicative than for linguistic competence and that a considerably higher number of teacher variables are significant for linguistic than for communicative competence.** This points to differences in the formation procedures and confirms the view that educational objectives tend to determine teaching methods so that no universal philosophy of language teaching should be sought. Moreover, the hierarchy of factors underlying success in FL acquisition is by no means identical with the hierarchy of factors underlying failure. Detailed explanations of this phenomenon are beyond the scope of the present article. It is enough to say, that **counteracting educational failure and working for success are two different pedagogical procedures based on two different groups of factors, the former being connected with attitudinal and motivational variables, the latter being related to technical aspects of the learning process.**

9 Conclusions and implications

The most important conclusions can be presented in the form of implications for the educational process at high-school levels. Let us mention a few of them.

1 More attention should be given to communicative competence since emphasis has so far been given merely to grammatical correctness in sentence patterns. This should be done through the shift of stress from grammar to vocabulary and fluency, especially during the third and the fourth year of instruction.

2 The cognitive rather than the audiolingual approach should be promoted since both the organization of the educational process, and the approach to psychological variables inherent in the code-learning theory, tend to reveal a strong correlation with the development of communicative competence.

3 More emphasis should be given to the preparation of students for individual work through getting them acquainted with self-instructional techniques and encouraging conversational practice with no fear of error.

52

4 More attention should be given to formal aspects of the educational process and especially to school equipment and the number of students in the language group.

5 Less rigid prescriptions should be presented to teachers in the field of teaching methodology as classroom techniques are insignificant compared with the attitudinal and motivational impact of the teacher's personality.

6 Individualization should be promoted whenever the size of class permits it. In all the other cases differences of approach to rural and urban learners should be introduced because of considerable discrepancies between the two groups in interests, motivating factors and needs.

GETTING ENGLISH INTO PERSPECTIVE

Douglas Pickett, The British Council

The form and nature of the IEA ten-nation English study have already been described by Carolyn Massad and Ian Dunlop, the former concentrating on the actual tests used to assess English proficiency (the 'cognitive measures'), and the latter concentrating on the pedagogical implications.

Accepting the validity and reliability of the cognitive measures and largely agreeing with the pedagogical suggestions insofar as pedagogy by itself is sufficient, I would like to take a closer look at the 'affective' measures and other data that belong to what is commonly termed 'the background' to English teaching but which I suspect may, in some cases, be as much 'foreground' as what actually goes on in the class.

Foregrounding the Background

The affective measures were largely based on questionnaires and were considerably less reliable than the cognitive measures. Because they raised so many problems of validity and interpretation, Inkeles left them out of his review but nonetheless acknowledged that: "The development and use of noncognitive measures was a distinctive feature of the IEA research, perhaps the most important innovation in this type of investigation." (1) A fundamental hypothesis of the English study was that school, student and teacher characteristics, both physical and attitudinal, would correlate in some way with achievement. As Lewis and Massad (2) caution, however, "we should not be too ready to stress the power of the conclusions arrived at in this study." If they support the experiential and intuitive opinions of teachers and linguists, well and good, but we are merely confirming what was already widely known. If they do not, they need to be impeccably reliable and conclusive to carry the day, for the intuitions that generate hypotheses are usually stronger that the data produced to test them. By their very nature the affective measures cannot be as compelling as this, still less the cause-and-effect relationship that might be argued by their correlations. In this type of investigation there is an inbuilt bias towards confirmation of hypotheses and at the very worst we get out merely what we put in. However, I believe that the IEA affective measures do considerably better than this and that the background and attitudinal data show some interesting correlations with achievement.

---

(1) op.cit. p. 144

(2) op.cit. p. 48

Unfortunately one very important background measure was not taken into account, namely, intelligence (IQ) or general ability (g), whatever you want to call it. That it comes into play is indirectly demonstrated in the pre-university, performed much better if the secondary-schools involved had earlier selected their intake on the basis of academic ability. As Inkeles puts it:

"It turned out that the marked differences among countries in the average performance of students at the pre-university level were almost entirely due to the differential selectivity of the several national school systems. The systems which are more selective in terms of social class, or, more important, which select on grounds of academic achievement, produced much higher achievement scores." (3)

A relationship between general ability and language ability would not come as a surprise to most teachers, and still less now, when the research of Oller and Perkins (1978) (4) seems to be showing that language ability (at least in its mother tongue variety) is almost the same thing as IQ. Put more cautiously and scientifically, "it is apparently the case that the bulk of variability in language proficiency test scores is indistinguishable from the variability produced by IQ tests... It has not yet been shown conclusively that there are unique portions of variability in language test scores that are not attributable to a general intelligence factor." (5) Although the IEA study itself does not warrant it, we might take this correlation for granted. All the same, it would have been instructive to see how far intelligence (or general ability) was subject to, or capable of over-riding, the background factors revealed by the study.

The five broad areas of background characteristics examined are set out by Lewis and Massad (6) as follows:

"Information Concerning National Characteristics"

General

1 Coverage of educational system

- a Age of beginning school
- b Percentage of each age group attending school
- c Expenditure on education
- d Degree of industrialization and economic development

(3) Op.cit. p. 146 note 2

(4) J.W. Oller Jr. and K. Perkins (eds) Language in Education: testing the tests, Rowley, Mass. Newbury House, 1978.

(5) J.W. Oller Jr. Language Tests at School Longman, London 1979 p.2

(6) op.cit. pp. 49-51

2 Organization of curriculum

a Subjects taught
b System of opinions including that affecting the choice of English
c Degree of centralized control of syllabuses and courses
d Degree of centralized control of teachers

3 Types of assistance to schools

a Nature of consultancy or inspection support
b Neighborhood support for education - museums, etc.

Linguistic Background

1 Languages spoken in the country and size of language groups

2 Social factors affecting the teaching of English

a Types of English contact - media, tourism and trade
b English in professional life and industry
c English in higher education

3 General aims for English in the country

a As a vehicular language
b As an academic pursuit
c As a key to understanding English culture
d For administrative reasons

4 Proportion of students learning English at each stage of schooling, and proportion of those who take English as a first/second foreign language

Information Concerning School Characteristics

Types of school

1 According to program

2 According to sex composition

Method of recruitment to school, or school selection

1 Public/private

2 Denominational/state

3 Neighbourhood school or not

Location of school - urban/rural

Size of school

Size of class on average

Number of staff

Composition of class - whether mixed ability or homogeneous

Organization of curriculum

1 Number of languages offered

2 Proportion of students taking English

3 Whether English is optional or obligatory at any stage

4 Length of English course in years

Extra curricular activities affecting English - e.g. English Society

Information Concerning Teacher Characteristics

Teacher training

1 Proportion of time given to language teaching method as part of course

2 Inservice training of teachers of English-courses and conferences

Individual teacher characteristics

1 Age

2 Sex

3 Qualifications and experience

4 Intensity of teaching task in English

a Number of classes
b Proportion of time given to English teaching

5 Attitude

a Towards English
b Towards aspects of English method

c Towards behavioral objectives, e.g., relative importance of reading and speaking English
d Towards time devoted to classroom preparation and correction of English homework

6 Membership in English teacher's association, attendance at inservice sessions, visits to English speaking countries, etc.

Information Concerning Student Characteristics

Age and Sex

Home background

1 Socioeconomic status of parents

2 Attitude of parents towards English and towards education

3 Home support for English, e.g., English books, parental help in English homework, etc.

Attitude

1 Towards career possibilities

2 Towards schooling

3 Towards English language and English culture

4 Towards various aspects of English, e.g., reading as compared with speaking

Aspirations for use of English in professional or for general purposes, etc.

Age of first exposure to English, outside school contact with English, e.g., visits to English-speaking countries

Amount of time devoted to English in school and in doing homework

Information Concerning Native Languages Observations on possible differences between English and the national languages as they are found to affect the learning of English.

The reasons for looking at these data were that: "By taking account of differences in the organization of education as well as the economic foundations

58

of the education systems, and relating these **input** differences to differences in the achievement of the students in the different countries, the **output** variables, it may be possible to arrive at some conclusions about the relative importance of educational and social considerations in formulating educational policy." (7) Since the study was completed this type of information has been supplemented in accessible form by a book which, according to its subtitle, is *The Sociology of English as an Additional Language* (8) and with the help of both studies I should like to look at the data and see if, in fact, educational policy can benefit.

The effects of these variables on individual student achievement are set out in detail with accompanying tables by Lewis and Massad in Chapter 9 (9). They are analysed to reflect the chronology of impact of six blocks of variables on the student, beginning with home variables and ending, surprisingly but for good reason, with a mother tongue verbal aptitude score, widely regarded as a measure of general intellectual ability. The results reported at this point, however, are to be looked at only as the beginning of a series of analyses to be continued in the individual countries concerned. It should be noted that the variables in this group show little consistency in the behaviour from test to test, country to country and population to population, so strong general trends are hard to discern. Until the data is further analysed a large element of imagination will be needed to account for some of the things that happen so a good deal of what follows here will be speculative.

Unconscionable Time

Ian Dunlop has drawn attention to the importance of the number of years over which the study of English is spread as one of the major positive factors leading to high achievement. This has nothing to do with the total number of contact hours over that period or with the age or grade of students. It represents rather the number of years the student has been 'living with' English and its importance falls off sharply in the pre-university Population IV. Hence it implies that the number of years up to the age of 14 or a little later is the crucial factor. This implies further things that might lead to successful learning e.g. an early start; slow feeding in small doses over a long period; and plenty of time to digest in between. However, the conclusion is not as safe as it appears since the Netherlands, with both fewer total hours and fewer years than Sweden (302 against 360 hours and 3.4 against 5 years) beat Sweden in the reading test for Populations II and IV and would probably have

---

(7) ibid p. 18

(8) J.A. Fishman, R.L. Cooper, A.W. Conrad The Spread of English, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass., 1977.

(9) op.cit.

59

scored high on the other tests if she had taken them since tests on individual skills correlated highly with each other. It seems only commonsense that how the time is used is more important than how it is distributed, so let us try to see what the Dutch do (or have) that keeps them up to Swedish standards though committing much less time to the study of English.

Comparison of Superlatives

Somewhat irresponsibly I am going to set out below some of the data from the study where Sweden and Netherlands show marked differences in school and teacher characteristics. There are more achievement data for Sweden than for Netherlands and the Swedish sample of teachers was about four or five times bigger than that of the Netherlands but for the sake of argument I am taking their achievement as being roughly equal both at 14 and pre-university level, and their respective data as being of equal weight.

School Characteristics	Netherlands	Sweden
Proportion of pre-university age group in school	13%	45%
Number of Students per teacher		
Population II	19.3	13.8
Population IV	18.3	13.9
Percent of schools having coeducation		
Population II	71.5	100.0
Population IV	88.1	100.0
Streaming practices-per cent fast and slow learners		
(i) taught separately	4.6	0.0
(ii) taught together		
always	79.1	100.0
sometimes	16.3	0.0
Admission criteria		
Population II		
(i) Local residency	26.6	93.4
(ii) Academic performance	90.0	6.5
(iii) Entrance examination	25.7	0.0

60

School Characteristics		Netherlands		Sweden	
	Population IV				
(i)	Local residency	17.7		34.3	
(ii)	Academic performance	98.5		98.9	
(iii)	Entrance examination	40.4		0.0	
% Having available foreign language societies to community		37.6		94.2	
% Having teachers involved in decisions regarding selection of					
Pop.II	Texts	98.6		31.7	
	Method	94.1		97.3	
	Syllabus	63.1		0.0	
Pop.IV	Texts	96.9		39.0	
	Method	95.9		98.2	
	Syllabus	47.0	47.0	0.0	
Purpose of Inspection		Pop.II	Pop.IV	Pop.II	Pop.IV
(i)	to report to authorities	24.2	24.6	28.4	68.8
(ii)	to advise on some school problems	67.6	71.1	21.4	11.0
(iii)	to advise teachers	12.2	4.8	85.3	95.5
(iv)	to assess teachers	21.7	33.1	7.5	6.5
% of school population studying English at grade 7/8 age 12/13		80%		100%	
on decision of					
Pop.II	student only	31.8		100.0	
	student and school staff	60.4		0.0	
	school staff only	7.9		0.0	
Pop.IV	student only	61.3		100.0	
	student and school staff	38.7		0.0	
	school staff only	0.0		0.0	
Having full time school librarian(s)		Pop.II	Pop.IV	Pop.II	Pop.IV
		15.6	23.4	12.9	82.6
Having full time lang. lab. technician		57.9	21.8	2.1	14.5

School Characteristics	Netherlands	Sweden
Teacher Characteristics		
% male teachers		
Pop.II	71.1	38.8
Pop.IV	88.4	43.9
Time spent preparing lessons: % spending		
less than 3 hours	36.2	5.8
3-6 hours	38.1	28.1
6-10 hours	21.6	35.9
more than 10 hours	4.1	30.2
% attending professional conference previous year	64.8	25.8
% having post-secondary education in English for		
1-2 semesters	3.7	17.0
3-4 semesters	16.1	51.4
5-6 semesters	17.9	21.6
more than 6 semesters	54.7	3.9
% trained in ELT method		
None	13.3	35.6
Very little	81.9	48.4
A fair amount	3.5	14.0
A great deal	1.3	2.0
% teaching another language besides English	14.5	64.2
% teaching English		
less than 5 hours	3.4	25.5
5-10 hours	6.9	51.5
10-15 hours	16.2	18.9
more than 15 hours	73.5	4.1
% attaching importance to the following in determining classroom practice		
(i) Post school needs of students	0.7	67.8
(ii) Requirements of official syllabus	9.8	43.6
(iii) Use of prescribed text	27.7	46.2
(iv) Requirements of external exam	8.2	22.0
(v) Preparation for work in next grade	4.4	52.7

62

School Characteristics	Netherlands	Sweden
% using the following materials/ approaches often		
Textbooks	1.1	98.5
Programmed instruction	86.9	4.6
Small groups	60.0	4.5
Individualisation	81.4	26.8
A/V, films, radio etc	19.6	60.5
Special projects and field trips	86.8	0.9
Questioning	0.6	66.1
% frequently using for assessment		
Teacher-made essay tests	85.4	4.1
Teacher-made objective tests	15.4	38.0
Performance on Homework	40.2	74.4
Classroom Approaches		
% using mother tongue often		
Beginning English	72.5	53.6
Intermediate English	67.3	53.2
Advanced English	48.2	37.1
% introducing		
(i) speech before writing	52.1	26.8
(ii) spoken forms first but written and spoken forms learned together	34.4	57.4
% teaching		
(i) correct spoken patterns only	27.3	2.1
(ii) correct spoken patterns followed by grammar rules	69.7	92.3
% using		
filmstrips	0.3	19.4
tape recorder	69.5	97.2

Except where otherwise stated I have used the figures for Population II, the fourteen year olds, and my aim has been to show how two rather similar countries at the very top of the league in English achievement can differ so radically on many of the parameters we like to think of as indicators of 'improvement' in ELT. The Dutch system seems selective but relaxed; the Swedish comprehensive but directed. The Dutch teacher seems to have a very nice time of it though he has more students, more hours, and larger classes than his Swedish colleague. To begin with he is probably a man; he has long training and a very large say not only in what methods he uses but in what the syllabus should be and what texts should be used; he spends very little time in preparation and, though he has a say in guiding pupils towards the study of English initially, he gears his classroom practice to no student requirement in particular. The Swedish teacher, on the other hand, is probably a woman in a mixed school with another language to teach besides English. She spends much more time in preparation yet has no say over textbooks and syllabuses. She is conscious of and sensitive to outside criteria that determine her classroom practice and has to teach a body of students who, apparently, chose to take English at the age of about ten without the benefit of adult guidance. She has to do this with less specialized training in English than her Dutch counterpart yet feels an obligation to use the mother tongue less than he does. When inspectors call she is overwhelmed with advice but rarely assessed whereas her Dutch colleague is rarely advised but frequently assessed.

So What?

Of course there is an element of caricature in this and I do not know either system at first hand. Clearly they follow rather different educational philosophies. However, the contrasting figures, untempered by further analysis or comparison with measures for other countries, could inspire the following thoughts:

1 If Sweden and the Netherlands achieve much the same, why bother about these parameters, which seem to have no effect one way or the other?

2 Conversely, should we look to the parameters in which their scoring is similar to indicate the factors that determine their common high achievement?

3 If one is marginally better than the other, can these parameters be be shown to 'cause' that higher achievement?

4 If so, can the practice of the higher achieving country be imitated?

5 What other factors will come into play to mitigate the effects of these?

The Song not the Singing

One point these two countries have in common is that most of the teachers admit to having very little or no ELT training. That should be a great comfort to us all. However, this is balanced by the fact that all justly claim a very competence in the language itself and this tends to be consistently associated with high achievement among the students. Israel, which tended to score high in both populations II and IV, had 25% of the teachers in the sample claiming English as their mother tongue. One would expect this high competence to lead to classes being held entirely in English as early as possible but this is not so. As Lewis and Massad put it: "Countries which tend to rely on the use of English differ according to the point in the English course where the reliance on English to teach the language becomes pronounced. Thailand and Chile, with low mean levels of achievement, tend to do so **earlier** than most other countries, while Finland, with a high mean achievement, delays the use of the language as a general rule until Grade 7, and Belgium and the Netherlands until Grade 8. There is a tendency for high mean levels of achievement to be associated with moderately late dependence (Grades 6 or 7) rather than earlier dependence (Grades 4 or 5) on the use of English." (10) Elsewhere, however, as Dunlop has shown, the teacher's use of English to give his lesson shows up as a positive factor and Lewis and Massad point out that it is a question of achieving the right balance between the use of the mother tongue and of the target language in the classroom.

I think this is an important set of conclusions for teacher trainers. For a long time it has seemed to me unfair to thrust a monolingual methodology upon teachers whose own command of English is rather weak. It puts the teacher in a awkward position in front of his pupils, who are quicker to spot error in others than they are to correct it in themselves, and must inhibit the personality he can display in front of them and therefore the degree of authority he can exercise. At the same time it denies him the use of his strongest weapon for communicating and explaining, viz his pupils' mother tongue. If the conclusions suggested by these figures can be sustained, it is possible that salvation could come from two directions. On the one hand, the teacher could be relieved of the obligation to try to do everything in English and, on the other, the time and resources formerly devoted (unsuccessfully) to making him able to do that could be devoted to actually improving his English, thus paradoxically putting him in a much better position to use English in the classroom!

Ways of Making you Talk

The relative value of methodology is also called in question by these figures. It is noteworthy that in Population IV the country which claimed

---

(10) op. cit. p.180

to have the highest percentage of teachers with 'a great deal' of training in English was Chile, (52.2 against 0.0 for Netherlands and 1.2 for Sweden), yet Chile scored lowest on all the cognitive tests. This does not, of course, show that a lot of methodology training actually causes failure in English and there were other countries, like Italy, where poor performance correlated highly with lack of training. What it does indicate, I suggest, is that methodology by itself is almost valueless, and probably would be even if it were not as debatable as it currently is. It must rest on a sound knowledge of the language if it is to be effective at all, and, by the time that stage has been reached, it will account for only a slight proportion of total achievement. Therefore it is not the best area to invest in.

Better Late than Never

But if we divert the resources to achieving high competence in the language itself will we be any more successful? Inkeles (11) shows how Chile also scored low on the mother tongue reading comprehension part of the IEA survey, and he relates this to a low score on the French test. The argument can be extended to the English study too: "only 5% to 10% of the students in the less developed countries were as competent in dealing with their native language as was the **average** student in the more advanced countries in dealing with his native language". It seems naive to expect an improvement in foreign language achievement without some prior improvement in mother tongue performance. In some countries where general educational standards are low, teachers of English get the feeling that it is not so much English that is a mystery to their students, as language itself; and it is very difficult to build where there are no foundations.

So this brings us to the question of where English should appear in the curriculum of such countries. The irony is that it is very often the poorer countries that need to introduce English early in the curriculum because it is important to national development and as a medium of instruction. Figures for 1971 given by Conrad and Fishman (12) show that Africa had 15,438,251 pupils doing English in primary school as against only 5,085,959 in secondary school. Asia had 22,077,553 at primary and 40,689, 048 at secondary level. The pattern for Europe was some 3 million at primary and 14 million at secondary. So in Asia and Africa it looms large and early: too early, really, for the mother tongue teaching and general education to have their effect, and claiming time that might otherwise be spent on mother tongue education. Because it is premature in that educational context, it tends to fail and needs to run very fast just to stay in the same place! It demands more time, effort and resources to maintain itself, which in its turn leaves less for other educational goals, including

(11) op. cit. pp.158-9

(12) in Fishman, Cooper and Conrad op. cit. P.24 table 1.3.7

continuation of English at secondary level, where it might be more useful. It become the cuckoo in the nest growing too big and throwing out the other chicks. The proportion of school budgets spent by Netherlands and Sweden on foreign languages was almost the same - about 17% for Population II and 16.3 and 14.0 respectively for Population IV. In Population II this was the highest for the eight countries included but Thailand, a much poorer country, came next with 13.1%. This probably represents a much greater strain on the resources available and in view of the results is hardly worth it. It is my belief that, in these circumstances, schools, teachers, pupils and governments would benefit if English was introduced later and more selectively. By that time pupils are more aware of what they might want English for and their numerous affective and attitudinal characteristics can be exploited.

East Meets West

This brings us to the **student variables.** There are very few sharp contrasts between Netherlands and Sweden on these measures except the fact that Sweden retains larger numbers of students from modest occupational backgrounds than Netherlands, in whose secondary population children of unskilled and semiskilled workers account for only 18% of those taking English in the sample. Not surprisingly, general parental support and interest tended to be greater in the Netherlands, though parental help specifically with English was higher in Sweden. The IEA study as a whole showed that home background counted for very little, particularly in languages, which seem to owe more to schooling than any of the other subjects. Nevertheless, large proportions of parents in both Netherlands and Sweden had studied English in percentages ranging from 31.3% of Dutch mothers in Population II to 60.4% of Dutch fathers in Population IV and were thus presumably able to exert some positive influence on their children. However, given the relative uniformity of these two countries it might now be more instructive to look for contrasts between them and Thailand on the student characteristics.

Glamour and Translation

About a quarter of the parents of Thai students had a mother tongue other than the national language though surprisingly large proportions of parents had previously studied English - over 40% of fathers and over 20% of mothers. A large proportion of Thai students (43.3%) in Population II started learning English much younger than either Dutch or Swedish students viz. in grade 1 or 2, and by grade 5 or 6 another 45.1% had joined them. By that stage 97.6% of the Swedes had started also but in the Netherlands only 9.1% were doing English. Once started the vast majority of Dutch and Swedish students did less than three hours of English per week but the Thais did considerably more on average. In fact, as Ian Dunlop's article (this volume) has shown, Thailand clocked up more hours of English instruction than any other country in the survey and considerably more than

its nearest competitor, Germany (803 against 562 hours at Population IV level). Over 90% of Thais in Population II studied in classes with more than 25 students as compared with some 30% of their Dutch and Swedish counterparts. In both populations Thai students rarely spoke to their teacher in English but frequently used the mother tongue in their English classes. In the Netherlands and Sweden students did more of the former and less of the latter. Conversely, Thai students spent a great deal more time on written exercises. In Population II they did more translation than the Dutch but in Population IV considerably less, keeping fairly close to Sweden in both. In classroom time devoted to intensive reading and reading for pleasure, there were no strong contrasts among the three countries though on another measure over 70% Thai students showed themselves content to get by with only a fair performance in reading English in contrast to the Dutch and Swedes, most of whom were aiming at reading well or very well. The same lack of ambition is apparent in the measures for speaking, writing and understanding English and was reflected in the Thai students' perception of their own achievement in these skills. No doubt one supports the other. Ironically, more Thais claimed to find English easy and requiring less work than their Swedish and Dutch counterparts. Over 40% of these in both populations found English difficult and claimed to work harder at it than other subjects. Thais differed markedly in finding that English got more interesting all the time (a maturation factor, perhaps?) but felt less strongly that it was important to learn English while still at school. On other measures of positive interest, however, they were much the same as the Dutch and Swedes. One would have thought that by the contrastive hypothesis Thais would have had much more difficulty and less interest in learning a language so remote from their own and that, conversely, the Dutch and Swedes would have found learning another Germanic language fairly easy. However, the IEA study offers no support to the contrastive hypothesis (Lewis and Massad op.cit. pp.73-74) since similar errors were observed across mother tongue boundaries and those due to mother tongue interference were negligible.

On the measures of **utility** for Population II one can detect some very interesting indicators of motivation. An overwhelming majority of Thais thought English would help them get a good job (88.1%), would be needed for further schooling (89.3%) and would enable them to read what they wanted to read (77.0%) and in all these cases they were more unanimous than their Dutch and Swedish counterparts. The three groups more or less agreed in attaching some weight to English as a means of making friends and contacts but only the Dutch (75.6%) regarded it additionally as an intrinsic educational good in itself - the hallmark of an educated person, thereby investing it with some glamour. They were well ahead of the nearest competitor, Italy (55.3%) on this measure and it is tempting to see this as a strongly motivating factor in Dutch performance i.e. it is part of a concept of what education is all about quite apart from considerations of utility. If so, however, it does not work as powerfully for Italy. The Thais had a high

considerations of utility. If so, however, it does not work as powerfully for Italy. The Thais had a high proportion (66%) of students claiming they were studying English because they enjoy it whereas the Dutch and Swedes were not so enthusiastic. The Italians with 72% got the most enjoyment out of it but, as in the case of Thailand, that did not guarantee high achievement - there is many a wrong word spoken with zest! In view of the fact that in most countries, at least for Population II, English is a compulsory subject, very few students claimed they were studying English because they had no choice in the matter, the highest percentage being in Netherlands (46.8%). Sweden had 27.7% and Thailand 30%.

Most interestingly in view of the relationship pointed out above between mother tongue and foreign language learning, 43% of the Thai students, the highest of any group, stated that studying English would help them to understand their own language better. Compare this with 11% for Netherlands and 7.7% for Sweden. There seems to be a strong connection between mother tongue development and foreign language competence. The Thais also scored highly (75%) in regarding English as a means of knowing and appreciating the Anglophone way of life, though Italy, with 85% came highest of all. Netherlands and Sweden were down in the forties, possibly because for them there is radio, TV, travel and many common European background aids to this without invoking the language.

The same measures for Population IV showed so much uniformity that one must either suspect the figures or acknowledge that a modern education leads to very similar student attitudes at pre-university level regardless of national differences. By then the students are largely agreeing with all the justifications for learning English so far mooted and, if this is not merely an indication that as they get older they get more cunning at *post-hoc* rationalisation, it may indicate that the alleged reasons for learning English are not fully appreciated until late in the secondary school. This would be a further argument in favour of a later start since by then mother tongue mastery would be complete and motivation and interest at their peak.

It is worth underlining the distinction, however, between measures of **interest** in English and recognition of its **utility.** Interest was a consistent positive factor associated with high achievement throughout the IEA study whereas utility showed negative effects. Perhaps if we preached less about the necessity to learn English and demonstrated more frequently that it could be interesting we might achieve more. Integrative motivation seems to work better than instrumental. This would be an argument in favour of making it an elective subject in the primary. After all, who wants what everybody is obliged to have? There can be no distinction in possessing it, only in rejecting it. The same argument could, of course, be applied to universal compulsory education as a whole - but hardly within the bounds of this article.

It is frequent in articles on TEFL to apologize to readers for posing questions and not offering answers. I have offended in the opposite respect in offering premature answers from only a portion of the data when the data as a whole really leave us largely with questions. The published IEA study by Lewis and Massad offer more thorough analysis in a wider perspective. As a result the contrasts are toned down and what appear to be trends in one set of figures are offset by contrary trends in another. What I have tried to show, and what Lewis and Massad demonstrate, is that many of the correlations are our first hint that something is afoot, that there is a question waiting to be answered. Much more analysis remains to be done and indeed, the main criticism of Inkeles over the whole IEA study is that it is underanalysed.

Joker in the Pack

Since Word Knowledge (verbal ability) emerges as a predictor of success and is closely allied to what others might call IQ, the (g) factor, of language proficiency, it might profitably have entered the regression analysis at an earlier stage, perhaps before or immediately after home variables, and it might then be shown to account for much more of the variability than now appears. In its present form, the study assiduously avoids being in a position to state that those who are good at language are good at languages, or those who are clever in some respects are often clever in linguistic respects. If this is not so, it would have been fairly easy to demonstrate in the course of the study. If it is so, as many teachers intuitively feel and see confirmed by their daily experience, it would have done the profession a service to bring it out loud and clear. It would not, of course, have helped those students without that factor except in showing that their targets and treatment need to be different from those with it. By recognizing inequality we can take the steps necessary to compensate for it. If we ignore it and mete out the same recipe to all we merely perpetuate it. In this study we are left with the uneasy feeling that something obvious and important has been overlooked.

How often do we hear educationists blaming some methodology or other (usually 'grammar and translation') for not producing 100% competent linguists, as though foreign languages, of all the school subjects, were equally accessible to all and it is only the methodological barrier that prevents universal success? But are languages so unique? We do not expect all pupils to be fully and equally competent in other subjects - maths, physics, art, music or even mother tongue English. If differences in ability are recognised and permitted there, why not in languages? Of course there is a sense in which failure to learn a language sticks out like a sore thumb whereas failure to master other subjects can be concealed. As learning a language involves ultimately learning a whole system, so acquiring only part of the system, as you might in two or three years of study, is tantamount to not acquiring the language at all.

This is not to say that the other subjects to not form parts of larger systems but there are three important differences. First, the majority of people one is likely to talk to do not know the whole systems themselves and will not expect you to. They accept partial knowledge, or indeed, total ignorance as the norm. It is quite acceptable, even chic, to admit "I have no head for figures" or "I can't draw for toffee" or "I can never remember dates" or "Where on earth is Kamchatka?" but these are never taken as indicators that our teaching of maths, art, history or geography is hopelessly flawed. Secondly, ignorance of the whole system does not invalidate or cripple the bits of it one knows. Unlike language, the system does not need to be totally and simultaneously available even if at any one time one is only using a tiny part of it. Thirdly, everybody knows what knowing a language consists of (except linguists, of course) because they know their own mother tongue. They are therefore in a position to make unsympathetic judgements about the deficiencies of one's school French or school English. Unless they are sophisticated linguists themselves, they will not appreciate that, in a few short sentences spoken at the learner, the foreign interlocutor may range from using articles and the copula, that probably occur in the first week of learning the language, through complex tenses with modals, that may not appear until the third year, to slang, nonce-forms, acronyms, idioms, archaisms, local allusions and specialized vocabulary that never appear in a course at all. The grading and piecemeal feeding of language elements to the student, going usually from the simpler to the more complicated, is an artifact of the formal teaching process and the foreign interlocutor who is not in the trade himself will not know which parts of the system the learner can operate and which he cannot. The process of finding out is frustrating to him and painful to the learner so both tend to regard it as failure. So, unless one is afflicted with robust, extroverted garrulity and tenacious insensitivity to looking foolish, both of which seem to bolster the personalities of successful language learners, it is almost better to say at the start "I don't know this language" despite having spent three or four years studying it.

The language learner cannot make the historian's excuse 'It's not my period' or the stunted mathematician's 'We never got on to calculus'. For the other disciplines the glass of achievement is regarded as half full, but for the language learner, alas, it is regarded as half empty. The language learner fails in the same way as a man with a train ticket to Edinburgh fails if he gets out at Peterborough. Nobody regards reaching Peterborough as any sort of achievement; of course it is not if Edinburgh was our goal. But should it have been in the first place? Notional and task-based syllabuses, the 'Threshold' and 'Waystage' levels, are now, thankfully, recognizing the virtue of intermediate goals in language teaching and bringing that more in line with other school subjects. Among the laity however, not to mention quite a few people who ought to know better, widespread disappointment with language teaching remains a result and a function of unreasonable expectations perpetuating the search for a panacea, despite Henry Sweet's warning at the end of the last century that there is no 'royal road' to learning a language.

If we set English in the perspective of other school subjects, we shall be more philosophical about failure and moderate our expectations. The mixed abilities we recognize for other subjects will come into play here, and, if these can be traced to some general, possibly innate, factor, then we ought to know about it, build it into our plans, and give it some prominence in large scale studies of student variables.

The home and 'class' variables, which are fashionably believed to be decisive, played only a very minor role. As Inkeles (13) points out: "Differentiation of family conditions clearly does not, in itself, decisively determine the academic performance of the child. .... After the socioeconomic background of the students has been taken into account, students are still remarkably different in their academic performance, with about 90% of the variance in their test scores still remaining to be explained by other factors." Among these other factors are school factors, whose importance seems to have been vindicated by the study. How important they are, however, appears to depend on the order in which the block of school variables enters the regression analysis. "Even when home background variables were put into the regression first, school quality emerged as an important influence. .... Moreover, when the school variables were allowed to have the privilege of entering the regression analysis first, and thus appear **before** the home background factors, the school variables consistently emerged as much more important than the home background variables." (14) This was true of all the subjects in the IEA studies but for the foreign languages English and French it was triply true, the school factors being more important in the ratio of 1:3, as opposed to 1:1 for the other subjects.

One wonders, therefore, how large the Word Knowledge block would have loomed if it had been entered earlier and not at the end when there was very little variance left to account for. Yet we should not expect too much even from that for teachers in selective schools with classes of students more or less on a par for IQ and general academic ability will still find some who are good at languages and some who are not. However much we explain there always seems to be a residue left to explain.

Rifts Loaded with Ore

No doubt the IEA study will be used to argue one point of view or another for many years to come. One can agree or disagree with the conclusions or try to invalidate the measures on which they were made; but one cannot ignore the study altogether. The figures are there in rich abundance and will not go away. As they strike chords in teachers' experience and prompt

---

(13) op. cit. pp.185-6

(14) Inkeles op. cit. 0.187

further investigation, our picture of what contributes to success in learning English will gradually become more complete. If it is true that methodology by itself may not count for a lot, it is equally true that that is about the only area the teacher can control, so it will continue to be the focus of training *faute de mieux*. However, the other variables now come fairly and squarely into the picture and the people who are in a position to control those might take steps to provide the right environmental framework for the teacher's training to work and not blame his shortcomings alone when it does not. In the meanwhile, I have tried to show that by judicious use of the study, some of the worry, waste, false emphasis and false optimism can be taken out of the perpetual process of seeking higher national achievement in learning English.

EXTRACT FROM: **THE INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT - A REVIEW**
Alex Inkeles, Stanford University

(This extract is the concluding section of the Review by Professor Inkeles, Stanford University. *International Studies in Education* (9 volumes) by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement which originally appeared in *The proceedings of the National Academy of Education* vol.4, 1977. We are grateful to Professor Inkeles and the National Academy of Education for permission to reprint this section in its entirety.)

"The IEA reports contain data which permit one to explore many issues. Among these are the role of sex, the training and competence of teachers, the consequences of tracking programs and schools, the impact of highly selective and of relatively unselective school systems on both the advantaged and the disadvantaged student, and the role of student interest and motivation. These topics are more or less consistently and systematically discussed in the several topical studies, and the results for the entire set are very briefly summarized in Walker's volume. The one chapter in Walker in which this summary is presented has a compactness and conciseness which will be deeply appreciated by anyone who can spare this whole subject no more than half an hour. But anyone with a deeper interest, and a desire to see some systematic analydid rather than a mere precis of findings, will be profoundly disappointed. He will find himself in the position of a gourmet who arrived at a famous inn anticipating a series of complex menus of subtly blended ingredients only to be told he was to take his whole allotment of meals in the form of a single capsule. Moreover, it will not do to say that, after all, real meals are available in the form of the several topical studies. Persisting with our analogy, we would reply that those studies are more like the ingredients for making a meal, but not quite the meal itself. It is a bit as if the chef never arrived to put it all together.

A Pattern of Insufficient Analysis

In short, the data collected by the IEA project has been left seriously underanalyzed. This may seem a curious remark to come from someone who has just had to work his way through a set of nine books, which are accompanied by four technical monographs, all of which, in turn, had been preceded by the two volume report on mathematics, the whole now totaling some 3.500 pages, including hundreds of tables. Given this output we clearly cannot say that they did not do enough. This issue is more one of not thinking things through enough so as to be sure to do the right things. The insufficient analysis is manifested in four main forms.

Inconsistency from Volume to Volume

The authors of several of the topical studies failed to perform one or more of the types of analysis which seemed to be considered by others as part of the standard package which all the collaborators had evidently contracted to produce. Obviously, this seriously hampers efforts to do systematic comparisons across subjects, countries, or influences. Even in the case of the most rigidly imposed system, that of blockwise regression, we sometimes have four blocks and sometimes six. We sometimes get a basic regression, but sometimes not. Separate regressions for each country may be given in one or two volumes, but not elsewhere. The gain in knowledge from one age group to another is sometimes reported, sometimes not. Between-school variation is systematically treated in some volumes, but not others, and so on.

The same pattern was, almost by definition, more prevalent in the case of the more important innovative types of analysis. Schwille's initiative in entering blocks into the regression in more than one fixed order, should have been followed in the other studies. So should the rather obvious devise of putting the results from all countries into a single master regression, as Carroll did in his "international French class." Of course, these ideas may have come along too late to be adopted by all. They may also have been proposed by some but found lacking in merit by others. Furthermore, there is always the problem that weariness, the pressure of other obligations, or lack of money will push people to cut short the analysis of their data. No matter how readily we can anticipate the reasons, however, the project as a whole must be seriously faulted for failure to maintain the sort of consistency which would have facilitated comparisons based on the entire set of studies.

Failure to Express Results in Accessible Form

The authors of the IEA studies underanalyzed the data by failing to convert their statistics into concrete forms that teachers, policymakers, and laymen could easily grasp.

To comprehend the meaning of test results and, in particular, to make judgments about how important a given amount of change may be, most people need to have the outcomes described in terms for which there are easily identifiable referents in the real world. Examples of such measures are those which describe either the number or percent of correct answers; or the proportion who achieved a given standard; or value of one unit, say a year in school, expressed in terms of another unit, such as the number of additional questions mastered. Correlations and beta weights from a regression do not meet this standard; yet, such statistics are the almost exclusive media used to communicate results in the several volumes.

Even the fundamental method of producing standard scores to permit comparisons across countries and sample groups was not consistently used in the several volumes. One goes a long time, indeed, before one finds a statement of the type "N percent more of this group than of that group correctly answered more than half the questions," or "a year of extra schooling generally resulted in the ability to answer N more questions correctly out of the basic set of 100 used in the test." The means for making such translations were generally available to the authors. Either the requirement that those resources be used was not generally established, or the majority of individual authors thought it not worth the effort. Whatever the reason, the failure to carry the analysis to the point where results could be presented in more concrete and readily comprehended form will undoubtedly severely limit the impact of this potentially vital research on teachers and makers of educational policy.

Failure to Analyze Separate Social Groups

Although considerable attention was given to the three separate age groups composing each national sample, the IEA studies consistently failed to present separate analyses of major social groupings cutting across these age cohorts. The most obvious of these distinctions are those based on social class background, on urban versus rural residence, and on race, religion, or ethnicity.

In the Belgian case, separate samples were collected for the French- and Flemish-speaking schools, but these entered the analysis more or less as two separate countries. Beyond this, one draws rather a complete blank both as to the relative standing within countries of children from the major social divisions, and as to the distinctive pattern which various influences produce within the different social groups. It is, of course, true that one of the central measures in all IEA studies is the measure of the socioeconomic background of the children. But we are not given scores which permit us to assess the performance of children of workers as against professionals. We know about the role of class only as it enters the regressions as a variable. Perhaps more important, we are not given an opportunity to assess whether the factors which influence the outcome of schooling in one social class or setting operate the same way in other classes or settings. For example, the qualities of the school and the preparation of the teacher might not make much difference in the civics knowledge of children in urban areas because so many other features of the child's urban environment provide information about world politics and world geography. For children from poorer peasant families living in rural areas, however, those other influences might be very weak, and the quality of the school and the teacher might then make considerably more difference in influencing the outcome of education. Regression analysis limited to total samples incorporating all basic social strata alike tend to obscure or even distort some of the most important processes distinctive to the experience of particular social groups.

76

Failure to Evaluate the National Context

The fourth manifestation of underanalysis of the IEA data has already been commented on extensively, and the point requires little further elaboration. Despite the fact that up to 19 countries entered into the studies on some subjects, we are left with very little idea as to the significance of the national context as a determinant of student performance. The national case study volume correlates many national characteristics, such as GNP, with test scores, but curiously fails to put it all together in a full scale regression in which GNP or other summary national characteristics enter as a variable.

Carroll is to be commended for putting everyone into an "international French class" for purposes of regression analysis, but, curiously, he failed to include the wealth or other characteristics of the countries in the regression as predictors. We are left with much less understanding of the contribution made by the national setting than we should have been, especially considering how this research was explicitly defined and justified as being done specifically for the purpose of international comparison.

Other Gaps

In addition to the four rather general forms of underanalysis in the IEA studies, there are numerous other subjects which actually were dealt with extensively in the individual volumes, but were not made the focus of a systematic analysis in the summary volume. A partial list of the subjects which the summary volume should have looked at systematically, that is, across countries, tests, and age groups, would include the following: how regular was the relation between one subtest and another, and between subtest and total score, in the different subjects; what was true of gain or "growth" scores across countries and tests; how did predictors vary in importance from test to test, and how far did any evident pattern hold across age groups and countries; what was the relative contribution of age - as an indicator of maturation - as against grade as an indicator of amount of schooling?

Virtues of the IEA Enterprise

It is the responsibility of a reviewer to identify and report what he perceives to be the deficiencies in the design and execution of a research project, but it would be unfortunate if the list of inadequacies just enumerated, and other criticisms scattered through this report, led some to conclude that I find little or no virtue in the IEA enterprise. That is far from true. On the contrary, I consider this research to be a landmark, at least in its design and execution, even if not in its analysis. It is decidedly notable in many respects.

Rigorous Crossnational Design

Above all, it is notable for its commitment to the idea of, and its success in conducting, a strictly comparative research, one following a standard design across subjects and countries. The IEA group made great strides for us all by giving us evidence that has substantial promise of producing generalizations having relevance across countries and populations. Their effort contrasts markedly with the usual pattern of social research which generally leaves one completely uncertain whether the facts described and the conclusions reached apply to any but the special, indeed often unique, samples and situations studies. Moreover, in its crossnational design and operation the IEA far transcended the rigor of most multinational research. Such research is often not strictly comparative at all, but is only a form of "parallel play", having no promise of meaningful cumulation of results across countries because sample, design, instruments, and all are allowed to drift to wherever the special interest of the local collaborator, or the presumed special interests of the local setting, may take them.

This comment should not be interpreted as suggesting that the IEA group went on a blind safari, doing only what **they** thought worthwhile without any insight into, or accommodation to, local needs, interests, and characteristics. On the contrary, the IEA group is to be commended for the great effort it invested in securing suggestions and evaluations from the local teams that did the actual testing in each country. While stimulating such local wisdom, the IEA group were remarkably successful in maintaining the basic framework of their study across topics, samples, and countries.

Scope of Coverage

The IEA research is notable for its scope ofcoverage, as to the subjects studied, the countries involved, the age range sampled, and, above all, the great variety and detail of the explanatory variables considered. In particular, the range and diversity of the measures of the quality of teachers, curriculums, and schools, is most impressive. The broad scope of the IEA studies is also manifest in the regular inclusion of measures of learning which go beyond the usual academic subjects - mathematics, science, and reading. Outstanding examples of these innovations are the tests of "understanding" in science, of authoritarianism in the research on civics, and of "patterns of response" to story content in the study of literature.

Catholicity of Perspective

The diversity of explanatory measures introduced and pursued expresses another virtue of the IEA studies, namely their catholicity. This quality is manifested in numerous ways. It is rare that one can both start and finish a social science research with so little cause for concern that perhaps what

one finds in the text has been unduly shaped by preconceived notions and foregone conclusions. A wide variety of perspectives was brought to best in this research, and many competing theories were given an opportunity to test their mettle. No obvious dogmas guided the design, distorted its facts, or censored its conclusions. It set out neither to destroy old idols nor to enthrone new ones. The presentation of fact is fair, the interpretations are reasonable and evenhanded, the conclusions generally seem sound and warranted by the facts.

Advanced Methods

The IEA study is notable for the modernity and sophistication of the methods used. This is not to say that what they did will generate no disagreements nor, that few will be ready to fault them on any but minor matters. The state of the art is such as to make that condition quite unattainable. However, compared to the great majority of run-of-the-mill studies in education, this research shows decided sensitivity to issues of reliability and validity in test construction. The use of contemporary multivariate analysis is central to their approach. Interesting solutions to special problems are regularly pursued, as in Purves's effort to represent statistically the style or pattern of response to literature among different national groups.

Important Findings

Finally, and most important, the IEA studies are notable in many of their specific findings and general conclusions. Altogether there may be two dozen which, in my view, merit the designation of being really fundamental conclusions, of which only a few illustrations may be offered here.

In many cases the material is notable not because it surprises but, rather, because it confirms what we expected but could not previously state with certainty. In this category falls the finding that in science the relationship of sex to performance is quite strong, with boys scoring higher than girls. In other cases we most likely would have had no clear expectation, but must henceforth reckon with a new and striking result, as in the discovery that home background has only a modest influence on mastering English as a foreign language, whereas the desire to learn has a strong effect. In still other instances, well formulated, strongly held, and often seemingly firmly established theories come into very serious question as a result of this research. As an example of such customary wisdom now found more questionable I may cite the assumption that school qualities exert very little influence in test scores once the social background of students is taken into account, or the assumption that interest in science hampers the development of the humanistic concerns and vice versa, or the assumption that putting poor students in elite programs may help the slow but is sure to impede the progress of the fast. Each of these popular assumptions is seriously challenged, indeed may be definitively proved wrong, by the research results contained in the IEA studies.

The IEA research is, then, a great step forward. The fact that it is often difficult and frustrating to obtain the facts and knowledge embedded therein should not blind us to the substantial accomplishment. I can testify that the yield from digging, generously repays the effort. One can do much more, vastly more, if one goes to the tapes containing the data, which are being deposited in a number of data banks. To report that there is still so much more to do is, in effect, to give a compliment to the team which did the research, for that assertion highlights the great effort that was put into this study. Very few of the remarks we normally glibly make about the causes of academic failure and achievement can henceforth hope to escape scrutiny in the light of what the IEA studies have shown. Moreover, we shall further mine this lode, and very profitably, for many years to come.

SYLLABUS CONSTRUCTION FOR FOREIGN-LANGUAGE TEACHING: RECONCILING THE APPROACHES

William R Lee

In this paper I shall be dealing over-simply, and perhaps even dogmatically, with certain matters, since time is short. However, there are perhaps advantages in having to look for essentials among numerous inessentials.

Making a foreign-language teaching syllabus and using that syllabus appear at first sight to be distinct activities: first, the syllabus is drawn up and then, later, teachers put it into practice. Well, it is not quite like that, since while you are making the syllabus you need to think about the circumstances in which it is to be used, and of course about the kind of learners. This point is central to the rest of what I would like to say.

A syllabus is, or should be, a specific thing. You cannot make a general sort of syllabus which will do for any type of learner in any place: there's little sense in trying to do that. The syllabus has to be adapted to what we know of the learners and of the teaching-learning circumstances. We have to think: Who is this syllabus for? Children or teenagers or serious adults? Learners who meet with the language daily outside the school or those who do not? Learners whose native language resembles the one they are learning or those whose language is very different? Those who have few classroom periods during the whole course or those who have many? And so on. Making and using overlap. It's the same with anything that's going to be used: while you're making it you need to think of the uses and the users.

Well, what is a syllabus? As I use the word in this paper, it is essentially a statement of what should be taught, year by year - though language-syllabuses often also contain points about the method of teaching and the time to be taken.

How should the making of such a syllabus be approached? It needs, I believe, to be approached from **several** angles, all of them of great practical teaching importance.

One such approach, taking account of the grammatical features taught, results in so-called structural syllabuses and a number of well-known, interesting, and (in good teachers' hands) very effective textbook courses of the last twenty-five years or so have been based, at least in part, on syllabuses of this kind. (I say 'in part' since the basis has never of course been syntax only, but phonology and lexis as well.) Let us continue, however, to over-simplify, and to say that structurally based syllabuses rest on a choice of syntactic features, such as the present perfect, the "going to" future, the infinitive of

purpose, comparative and superlative constructions, anomalous finites, articles and possessive pronouns, and so on and so on - it would be easy to stretch out the list. This is the very stuff of the language-syllabus as most of us know it, and central to it is the idea of **choice:** except over a very long period of time we cannot teach, and the learners cannot learn, the use of it all. What is chosen provides a kind of skeleton on which the living flesh of the language is moulded.

Now skeletons are not very inspiring objects; but let us recognise the fact here that the choice of syntax has, in general, not been made unsystematically. Various factors (many of them dealt with, for example, in W F Mackey's *Language Teaching Analysis*) have commonly been taken into account, of which the one most relevant to my present argument is frequently of occurrence. A general view has been (in my opinion rightly) that if a syntactical item has a high frequency of occurrence among native speakers of the language, it should be given a place in the syllabus of a basic course for non-native speakers - a place somewhere, though not necessarily at the beginning, since other considerations must help to determine the placing and sequencing of such items.

It is not especially difficult - taking English as an example - to see what the most frequent syntactic items are, and it is clear that not only are they, as I have said, the very stuff of language-syllabuses as many of us know them, but the very stuff of the language itself. If we speak or write the language, there is no gainsaying the fact that we use them most of the time, and there is little we can say or write without them. They have practical importance as essential means of communication.

It is of course true - as some writers about other types of syllabus have stated - that at times this grammatical material has been taught as if knowing it were an end in itself - taught, in fact, as mere forms. But the statement is inaccurate and grossly unfair if it implies that all or even most well-known textbook courses in English as a foreign language published during, say, the last two decades have taken this line. On the contrary, it has been normal, I would think, to see the forms as means or tools of communication, to discriminate among various uses of the forms (especially the tense-forms) in different circumstances and for different purposes, and to embody practice of the forms in situations where communication of one sort or another was apparent and where regard was paid to the interest taken by the learners. But statements of the sort referred to continue to be made, regardless of the facts. (When shall we see a PhD thesis entitled 'On the accuracy of EFL specialists' statements about their predecessors'?)

It is a little sad that at this stage in the developing history of TEFL it should be necessary to declare, as I think it is necessary, that one of a language-teacher's main tasks - as much now as ever - is to help learners good command of the basic grammar of the language, and that this

acquire a good command of the basic grammar of the language, and that this declaration is by no means regarded as obvious. Naturally such a command is for purposes of communication, though not in any narrow sense: one need not be discussing the weather or ordering a restaurant meal to be communicating: communication is in progress as one sits by the fire silently studying *Le Monde* or *The Mayor of Casterbridge* but it is one-way communication.

The structural/grammatical approach is thus one essential approach to the making of language syllabuses, though only one. It is, I believe, particularly relevant at an elementary stage of learning (which may, in certain circumstances, mean the first few years). At an advanced stage - definable in part as a stage by which the learners' command of most of the basic grammar is fairly secure - it is much less relevant, and has bearing only on remedial or supplementary work.

I have commented on what is known as the structural or grammatical approach to syllabus-making first, partly because it is familiar and partly because it seems to me indispensable if the basis of elementary communicative ability in the new language is to be laid. I now turn to other important approaches: but before doing so, I would like to make an essential distinction, that between syllabuses and pre-syllabuses. A language-teaching syllabus needs always to be specific; that is, drawn up with some particular type of learners and of circumstances in mind: I hope this is a truism. As far as grammar and vocabulary are concerned, there is bound to be choice, and that choice is most severe at an elementary stage: another truism. But what is the choice made from? Perhaps only from the syllabus-maker's or course-writer's **impression** of English as a whole - but perhaps from some definable source, such as a full grammar of English. This is what I call a **grammatical pre-syllabus** for English is a full statement of the grammatical facts of English looked at as possible teaching-learning material. There is more than one kind of pre-syllabus.

What about other approaches, then? During the last few years, and here and there only, 'structural' has become almost a four-letter word (in spite of containing ten letters), while 'notional' is in good odour and above all up to date. The crudity of this popular view is extreme and regrettable, but I should like to acknowledge in passing that at least some of those who have written about the so-called notional approach take a much less crude attitude. (For example, among recent articles which have commented on the issues involved with subtlety and moderation are David Wilkins's *Current developments in the teaching of EFL'* and Robert O'Neill's *'The limits of functional/notional syllabuses - or "My guinea-pig died with its legs crossed" '*, both published in *'English for Specific Purposes'* (ed. S. Holden, 1977.))

Certainly the 'notional' approach offers us another way of looking at what has to be learnt when we learn a language. To speak a new language well,

we not only need the ability to use its grammatical features as lexis communicatively, but to know what language is appropriate to various social situations - the language of greeting, of inquiry, of excuse and apology, of interruption and disclaimer, of praise and dispraise, invitation, warning, surprise, thanks, satisfaction, requesting, denying, persuasion and dissuasion - to mention only a few things of this order. Some of this language has always been referred to in syllabuses and included in textbook courses, though not enough. Foreign-language learners need this kind of oral competence, both productively and receptively, and no doubt also in reading and writing. But they need it additionally, and not alternatively. A 'notional' approach cannot reasonably be regarded as an alternative to a grammatical approach. Both are essential. In what ways they can be mixed or blended in a syllabus is another matter. My own view is that some elements of a 'notional', syllabus can be introduced from the beginning: and there is nothing particularly new about doing that; it has been widespread practice for generations.

The idea of pre-syllabuses applies just as much to this kind of language as to grammatical facts. One cannot teach everything here, but must choose, taking account of such considerations as the kind of learners, the learning situation, the length of the course, and the likely situations of use. Not all learners need, for example, the language of argument or persuasion: this is something for a fairly advanced stage.

A **notional pre-syllabus** for English would be a full statement of how all the 'notions' (as the word is now understood in recent language-teaching discussion) are expressed in English, and this is not available. The best the syllabus-maker can do is to consult such sources as *The Threshold Level* (Council of Europe), and perhaps Leech and Svartvik's *A Communicative Grammar of English*, and to a much more limited extent A.S. Hornby's *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*, Part 5.

The main disadvantage of an exclusively structural approach is that the learners do not acquire enough 'social' language, although some has generally been included in the so-called structural courses. The main disadvantage of an exclusively 'notional' approach is that, if it were adopted throughout, the learners would not acquire a sufficiently firm grasp of the basic grammar, without a firm command of which little can be said, understood, or written clearly about anything.

These two main approaches need therefore to be reconciled, and this can be done in the way they are put into practice in teaching. Structural material has from time to time been presented to learners as mere forms ('bare bones grammar'), although on the whole it has been embodied in situations. And here I come to one of the most unsatisfactory words in the TEFL lexicon, **situation**: unsatisfactory because it is used in more than one sense. I merely mean that, in the process of teaching, the structural material to

be taught is embodied in actions and activities which are reasonably interesting to the learners, which show up the meaning and use of the structural item, and which (ideally) give them experience of communicating with others by means of it. Thus if there is a conditional to be taught, a situation in which it is natural to use conditionals has to be found - perhaps a series of events leading to a car accident (If he had checked his tyres he wouldn't have skidded - If he hadn't been going too fast he could have stopped in time - etc.). There is no time to illustrate this point fully. In so far as isolated sentences are used, there will be micro-situations, and the learner has to switch his attention rapidly from one set of events to another quite different. Extended situations (macro-situations - a whole series of goings-on in one place at one time) involve the learner's attention and interest more thoroughly.

But 'notional' material needs of course similar embodiment. There is not much sense or interest in learning how to apologise, invite, request, persuade, complain, greet, and so on, unless situations can be found or contrived in which it seems natural to do so. There is a danger here of teaching little more than the mere phrases. You can't learn a language like that.

What lies at the heart of successful language teaching is subject-matter matched to the learners' experience and interests. If this is provided, along with action and activity which also appeals, being matched to age and inclination, then mastery of the use of structural items and mastery of the use of 'notional' material cannot be seen as alternative or in conflict. The macro-situation (for example at intermediate level, role-playing sequences or dramatisation, or inquiry projects) is the starting-point, and (at least from the learners' point of view) predominates. Within it one teaches use of the grammatical and 'notional' features it seems possible and desirable to teach. But the situations, the embodiments, do need to be chosen and 'doctored' so that nothing of importance is left out. This may possibly be the course-writer's and perhaps the teacher's task rather than the syllabus-maker's.

One final emphasis, in this grossly over-simplified comment on syllabus construction. Of prime importance is interest at the time of learning. Only this can sustain or awaken a desire to use the communicative resources of the new language. It is therefore necessary to know the learners - know them as human beings and not simply as the victims or beneficiaries of language-teaching syllabuses. The learners always come first.

DIFFERENCES IN TEACHING FOR DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES - OR THE TEACHER AS CHAMELEON*

Peter Strevens Wolfson College Cambridge

The purpose of this paper is to support a basic hypothesis about effective language learning and teaching. The hypothesis is that to be effective in promoting learning, teaching must take account of a large number of variables. The topic will be divided into three sections: first, the way in which our professional perceptions of the variables in language teaching have changed over the years; second, an analysis of the variables that seem to operate; and third, some consequences of these changing perceptions and these variables.

Our Changing Perceptions of the Variables

Very few of us see more than a small selection of the main variables - just those variables, in fact, which operate with obvious effect in our own particular circumstances. What is more, even if all teachers agreed in their understanding of those variables they could observe and identify - which they don't - it is only by pooling and comparing their observations and their responses that we gradually establish a full perspective of the complex activity we are all engaged in.

The Blind Men and the Elephant (A Hindoo Fable) John Godfrey Saxe, 1816-1887

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The **First** approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
'God Bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!'

The **Second**, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, 'Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!'

The **Third** approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant
Is very like a snake!'

The **Fourth** reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
'What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,' quoth he;
''Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!'

The **Fifth**, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: 'E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!'

The **Sixth** no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant
Is very like a rope!'

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL: So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

* This article is reproduced here by kind permission of TESOL Quarterly

In this regard we have been, in the past twenty years, somewhat in the position of those Blind Men of Indostan in the poem by John Godfrey Saxe (an American poet of the early 19th century), who encountered an elephant for the first time.[1]

We, perhaps are in a much happier position than Saxe's wise men, because our 'elephant' has been reported, observed, photographed and subjected to minute analysis and discussion by annual Conventions for the past dozen years. As a result, we share a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of what an elephant is like than Saxe's blind Indostanis could muster - though at the same time we are increasingly aware that there is not just one elephant, but whole families and populations and even sub-species of elephants, and that therefore the scope of our study gets ever wider, even as our comprehension of it grows.

You will recall that one reason for the complementary analyses given by Saxe's blind men was that they each observed the elephant from a different standpoint. It is interesting to notice that a whole sequence of different viewpoints about the nature of our own profession, TESOL, is embodied in the sequence of acronyms or initials that have been employed on both sides of the Atlantic. The proto-TEFL term, as it were, was probably ELT (English language teaching), the original undifferentiated term used in Britain as early as 1945 and still employed today, for example in the title of the British ELT Journal, founded in 1940. Before long it became necessary, especially in British ELT to distinguish between ELT in circumstances where the language had a special historical status in the community - for instance, English in Nigeria, or Hong Kong, or Fiji - (where it is referred to as a **second** language, hence ESL), and on the other hand ELT in circumstances where the language has no special standing and is not in widespread use - i.e. where it is a **foreign** language, as in Japan, or Brazil: hence EFL. In British usage, when referring to the teaching of English to foreign students visiting Britain, the term **TEFL** became universal, because such students almost always come from and return to 'foreign language' countries. To sum up the distinction, for us in Britain ESL indicates sociolinguistic conditions in a foreign country which compel significant changes in teaching English there.

In the United States, though, I sense a great deal of free variation, uncertainty, even change of meaning, in the use of the terms TEFL and TESL. For a given activity, sometimes the one is used and sometimes the other. There are perhaps two reasons for this: first, the American profession has been relatively little engaged in ESL in the British sense (i.e. in former British countries) so that this EFL/ESL distinction has had little relevance; but in addition the issue has been clouded by multiple meanings for the word 'second'. By talking of a 'second language' - meaning the next one learned after the mother tongue - and by talking of a 'second **foreign** language' (or a third, or fourth) - for example, Spanish, French, German etc. in the school system - we have encouraged sematic ambiguity. By contrast, the name of

our organisation, TESOL, is clear and unambiguous in the way it unites **all** branches of the profession.

What terms came next? There is some uncertainty about the chronology. My own understanding is that the next development occurred when the special and contentious problem arose of teaching English to children of the black community in the United States: was it to be regarded as 'mother-tongue' teaching? Should it be handled as a branch of TEFL? Black English became accepted as a dialect of English to be reckoned with in educational terms, and in this way ESOD or TESOD were born - and even ESOLD and TESOLD: teaching English to speakers of other languages and dialects.

Yet that is not by any means the end of these subdivisions within our own profession. The term ESP (English for specific purposes) has come into universal use to designate the teaching of English not in general, but with particular restrictions on its aims, content or skill objectives. And within ESP, EST refers to English for science and technology, a particular sub-set of ESP which entails special learning fearures (and special teaching requirements, too) since the scientist or engineer has to learn 'the language of science' - whatever that is. The British Council favours a further internal distinction within ESP: EAP (English for **academic** purposes) and EOP (for **occupational** purposes).

There have been other TEFL-terms: EIAL (English as an international auxiliary language) had a brief existence in Hawaii before being dropped in favour of an INTER/INTRA distinction (English for **inter**national purposes, as in Japan, Brazil, etc. and English for **intra**national purposes, as for large populations of people in India, Malaysia and Singapore, and increasingly in other historically English-using countries.[2] (If I have time, I shall return later to this point, as it is of urgent and world-wide importance.)

Two other terms now in constant use have not been turned into acronyms or initials. In the United States, 'Bilingual Education' is a specialised and established branch of English teaching; while in Britain we refer to 'Immigrant Teaching', which is that special branch of teaching English to the children of immigrants within the framework of the ordinary State school system - in fact, as a sort of TEFL-flavoured mother-tongue programme.

The lesson to be learned from this sequence of TEFL terms is that in the short space of twenty-five years our perceptions of some major variables within our own profession have repeatedly grown sharper and more delicately differentiated, so that our existing ways of referring to what we do have become inadequate, and have required the acceptance of a dozen or more specialist terms. And there will undoubtedly be more distinctions made in the future.

---

(2) See particularly Smith (1978) and Strevens (1978).

Yet the terms we have discussed are only macro-variables, as it were. Beyond these macro-variables are a whole range of other choices, distinctions, alternatives, divergences - and these are variables whose operation affects our daily professional activity.

An Analysis of the Variables[3]

When we attempt a reasonably comprehensive survey of the many variables which in total affect our profession, some teachers will already be aware of all the factors I shall mention, and more: to them, my apologies. Others, especially teachers who have always worked in one particular branch of TEFL, will be like Saxe's Blind Men of Hindoostan because they will have seen some of the variables in action while being unaware, perhaps, of others; teachers with different experience will recognise a different selection, depending on which part of the TEFL elephant's anatomy they have been concerned with.

TEFL teachers who move from one kind of teaching to another - from teaching 'general' TEFL to adults in the United States or Britain, to teaching children in Colombia, to teaching intensive ESP for medical staff in a country on the Arabian Gulf, to university TEFL in Scandinavia, to teacher training in Singapore - peripatetic teachers quickly discover that there are indeed a great many variables at work. Let us look at five types:

1 **Some of these variables appear as restrictions upon what the teachers are actually permitted to do;** for example in cultural matters. In some societies, for instance, the kind of boy-girl relationships commonly found in TEFL textbooks, illustrations of girls in short dresses, reference to alcoholic drinks, mention of dogs as domestic pets, even relaxed relations between teachers and students if they are of different sexes - all these may be culturally unacceptable.

2 **Other variables will appear as limits on what is physically and organisationally possible:** very large classes; classroom furniture bolted to the floor (which severely restricts communicative activity and work in groups); inadequate numbers of classes per week; a school year that is nominally of 30 teaching weeks but in practice may be of 20 weeks or less: lack of central authority - or such draconian central authority

---

(3) The identification of variables has a long history. The analysis in this paper is concerned more with emphasising the scope and diversity of variables rather than with comprehensivity in detail. It builds on the work of very many specialists (see References). But one work above should be singled out for its subtlety and wide coverage of variables in the learning and teaching of languages, i.e. Wm F Mackey's (1965) **Language Teaching Analysis.**

that deviation from normal practice, even creative experiment by intelligent teachers, becomes almost a criminal offence; absence of suitable textbooks, teaching aids or equipment, even of blackboards and exercise books.

3 Some variables will affect the teacher through **standards of teacher training,** where the national average level of professional competence has pervasive consequences on what can be achieved in the classroom.

4 Yet other variables relate to **sociolinguistic attitudes and expectations:** if English is an unpopular language in a given place (for instance, in rural Quebec at present) teaching it may be ineffective for the learner and unpleasant for the teacher; if a community normally expects that its citizens **will** learn English (e.g. in Holland, or Scandinavia) they generally do so, but conversely, low expectations (as of learning foreign languages by English school children) are fulfilled by generally poor standards of achievement.

5 **The educational framework** of TEFL, too, may vary: in someplaces the teaching of English begins at age 7 or 8 and continues as a part of normal, liberal arts education, for up to 10 or 11 years; elsewhere it starts only at age 14 and lasts for 4 years; (and for some students their long years of English in school may seem irrelevant and be largely ineffective); by contrast, the framework for ESP is almost always that of adult education: it is often independent of the rigid administrative matrix of general education, and is usually open for methodological originality - i.e. ESP is not tied to any particular method or materials - and in consequence the successes and failures in ESP are more directly caused by the teachers, as distinct from the system, than is the case in a general educational framework, where the system often casts the variables into a mould which makes success difficult to achieve, save by exceptional teachers.

Five sets of variables have been mentioned so far: restrictions on teaching, physical and organisational constraints, standards of teacher training, sociolinguistic attitudes, the educational framework. They can all be roughly classified as derived from **the community,** that is to say, from the mixture of sociolinguistic conditions and the current realities of educational administration. Teachers in Britain or America or Australia are of course equally subject to constraints of this type, but in those countries teachers tend to be unaware of them and only realize their existence on first working abroad, or occasionally at home when some really major reform is being fought through our various pieces of legislative and administrative machinery.

From variables ascribable to **the community,** and generally acting as constraints on the teacher, let us turn to other variables more directly under the control of teachers, or at least of **the teaching profession** at large.

It is necessary to do this in order to remind ourselves that although teachers work to a large extent within a matrix of conditions that are not of their choosing and are only minimally under their control, nevertheless in addition teachers themselves do have the responsibility for selecting among a wide range of further variables.

The most obvious sets of teacher-controlled variables fall under the twin headings of **syllabus** and **methodology**: i.e. the large and growing range of instructional techniques available to the teacher (roughly 'methodology') and the principles for selecting and organising the content to be taught (broadly, syllabus design').

The two are inter-linked. Modern views about the importance of the learner lead us to analyse the learner's needs in ever-greater detail, to establish with maximum certainty his precise aims and objectives; then to specify the language and other content he will require and to organise the sequence in which it is most appropriate to teach this content, to this learner; and also to consider what teaching techniques can most effectively be used, by the teachers available, to teach **this** content in **this** sequence to **these** learners, with these needs.

The first two parts of that process - analysing the learner's needs and objectives, and determining appropriate content and sequence - form part of **syllabus design.** This is a process where members of the teaching profession consider several dimensions in order to establish the best possible 'fit' or matching. What are these dimensions? Here are some of them:- The identity of the learners and their principal characteristics (age, educational level, stage of proficiency already reached, etc.); their aims and objectives (to pass a particular examination, to achieve practical oral communication with certain types of people, to read with understanding certain kinds of written text, etc.); the language appropriate to those objectives (which may either be 'general English', or may be some defined sub-set of English, like 'English for Indian village tropical health projects', or 'English for air traffic control', etc.) whether there is any special need for some items to be taught before other items (e.g. in a ESP course for ships' officers, to teach compass directions and bearings early on, where in contrast they might be taught late - or never - in a course for specialists in tropical medicine); - these are some of the dimensions to be considered.

In considering them, the syllabus designer will bear in mind several different aspects of the content: linguistic, situational, notional, functional and communicative. **Linguistic** aspects - i.e. the language content to be learned, in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, formulae and fixed expressions, idioms, and so forth; **situational** aspects: how to make the language content more interesting, more easily learned and remembered, and more like real life, by teaching it in relation to familiar or imaginative situations, like 'at the Post Office', 'telling the time', 'going to school', and so forth;

notional aspects: ways in which various fundamental notions about the universe are expressed in English - notions of time, of place, of case, even (i.e. 'who does what, who to, and with what result'); **functional** aspects: how English expresses certain functions of language, such as negation, possibility and impossibility, description, questioning, judgements, and many others; and **communicative** aspects: how to use English for meaningful, deliberate, effective communication between human beings, including discoursal and rhetorical rules.

Methodology, too, is a variable whose manipulation is normally open to the teacher, not imposed upon him or her by outside authority. The term includes both 'strategic' and 'tactical' decisions. Strategic decisions include such questions as: the balance of importance and time to be given to the various 'skills' of speaking, reading etc.; the extent of individualised procedures, if any; the relations between the teaching syllabus and any terminal assessment or examination; the degree of reliance upon class work and private study; the use or otherwise of language labs and other aids; and similar choices, and many others. 'Tactical' decisions include: the selection of particular teaching techniques at particular points in each course and each lesson, the flexibility of teachers to change their techniques from moment to moment according to the learning paths of the students, the encouragement of methodological originality and creativity on the part of the teacher (and even the learner, on occasion), and many more choices of this limited kind.

Compared with the central importance of syllabus design and methodology, the variables of **materials production** and **evaluation** are perh s secondary, even though their impact on the daily classroom life of the teacner and the learner is often considerable. There is, however, one further variable on the 'teaching' side (as distinct from the 'community' side) which must not be overlooked: **teacher training.** To the individual teacher, teacher training is usually looked at in terms of preparation for his or her personal career. The individual learner rarely even considers the question, except perhaps to reassure himself that he is being helped to learn by someone who is at least not an amateur - much as the patient awaiting surgical treatment likes to be certain that he is not in the hands of a do-it-yourself hobbyist. Yet on a larger scale the extent, nature and quality of the teacher training available in a given country will crucially affect the quality of teaching that is normally given there; and it will also largely determine which choices are made under the variables of syllabus design and methodology. So when we observe different kinds of teaching and different standards of teaching taking place under different conditions we can be sure that the kind of teacher training undergone by the teacher will be a major determiner; and we can also be certain that if we are seeking ways of modifying the teaching and learning in a given place, we shall be bound to include the teacher training system in our calculations.

92

The variable of **teacher training** embraces many elements. If one accepts that teachers are by definition members of the educated sector of the community (and that the notion of an uneducated teacher is, or ought to be, a logical contradiction) then a prime element in teacher training concerns the level of personal education possessed by the trainee teacher. A case can be made for the view that teaching, being a matter of close and continuous interaction between individual human personalities, also requires a high level of emotional maturity and stability. Then one must consider the balance between the three main components of a teacher training course: a **skills** component, which develops practical, instructional techniques, both those common to all branches of teaching and those that are special to TEFL - including, incidentally, an adequate command of the language he or she is teaching; and **information** component, in which the teacher takes in the very considerable body of knowledge about education, teaching, language, English today, sociology, psychology, the organisational framework he is working in, and much more; and in addition a **theory** component, which provides him with an intellectual basis for knowing not just **what** to teach and **how** to teach it, but also **why** to teach that rather than something else. Let me offer just one example of the kind of information that ought to be included in TEFL training courses. It concerns the astonishing changes that are taking place in the spread and functions of English on a global scale. Young teachers need to be informed about the way that English is now widely regarded, abroad as an international possession - it is no longer the cultural property of the British, the Americans, the Australians and New Zealanders. Teachers need to realize that in a growing number of countries - e.g. India, Singapore, parts of Africa - English is used by vast and growing populations of people (26 m millions in India alone) who never meet us native speakers and who have no desire or need to model their English on ours. We have to get rid of our monolingual ethnocentricity and accept the existence of a great many localised forms of English, one characteristic of which is precisely that they are different from British and Australian and American English. There are many other kinds of information to be included: this may serve simply as an example.

Yet even an ideal teacher training programme supplied to every TEFL teacher at the outset of his or her career fails to meet all the needs of the profession. I shall return to this point a little later.

But first we must look briefly at one other set of variables that affect our teaching: variables relating to the learner. To list them all would be a major task: we now recognise that TEFL learners are human beings (as distinct from laboratory animals) and that while they share certain universal human characteristics they also each carry a wide range of strictly individual features. How can we distinguish those that are significant from among the mass of learner characteristics?

There are three learner variables above all, it seems to me, which lie at the heart of the interaction between learner and teacher and determine how effectively the learner learns. These are: (i) the learner's **reasons for learning**; (ii) his or her **attitudes towards learning**; and (iii) his or her **expectations of learning**.[4]

Learners' **reasons** for TEFL learning vary very greatly: for young children, they are simply that it is normal and enjoyable to do what teacher says; for adolescents they are often founded on hazy notions of 'relevance' and on emotions of love or hate towards the teacher, and they are frequently negative reasons, so that learning does not occur; for adults, the reasons are generally quite definite and instrumental.

Learners' **attitudes** towards TEFL learning are a compound of their attitudes towards learning in general, towards English in particular, towards the teacher and the textbook, even towards themselves as learners.

Learner's **expectations** of TEFL learning are based partly on their past history and experience of language learning, partly on opinions fed to them by their family, their friends and their teacher, and partly on the current folk myth about whether his community normally expects people to learn English.

As far as teachers are concerned, they quickly discover two things: first, that the success of their own efforts in the management of learning, and of their learners' efforts in achieving their optimum learning rate (Strevens 1977), depends heavily on these reasons, attitudes and expectations; and second, that much of their time and thought is devoted to unobtrusive efforts to make these factors as positive as can be achieved.

To sum up this penultimate section, then, within the totality of TEFL there exist a large number of variables, identifiable broadly as relating to the community, the teaching profession itself, and the learner. In addition, the nature of the profession's perceptions about its own task changes and develops gradually with the passing of time.

In short, the teacher is like a chameleon. To be efficient - i.e. to survive - the chameleon must continually observe his surroundings and adapt to them. And adapting means action: it means selecting from among a range of possible colourings and patterns precisely those which are appropriate to the

---

(4) I am deliberately avoiding the term **motivation**, partly because it has different meanings for different people, but chiefly because **motivation** embraces a large number of factors. The 3-term analysis into **reasons**, **attitudes** and **expectations** is made from the standpoint of the teacher rather than on a basis of psychological or sociological analyses.

moment. The teacher, to be efficient - perhaps even to survive - needs to adapt in a similar way: to select from among a wide range of possible techniques and courses of action precisely those which are appropriate to the circumstances of the learning/teaching situation. That brings me to the third and final section - a very brief one - of my paper, in which I shall comment on the responsibilities of the teacher and of the profession.

Teaching is a hard and emotionally bruising occupation, and language teaching more so than most other specialisms, especially if the language one is teaching is not one's mother tongue. Teachers essentially need two distinct kinds of follow-up to be available to them after and beyond their initial training. One kind of follow-up must be the career-long provision of morale-boosters - of events where teachers can meet together, share ideas, renew acquaintance with success, seek professional commiseration with our little deprivations, and generally break free of the frustrations and annoyances of the daily round (the TESOL Convention is the outstanding example of this kind of event); also teachers for whom English is not the mother tongue, opportunities to restore and improve their command of the language.

The second kind of follow-up is of a different kind and affects only a proportion of teachers, though again it is essential to the onward development of the profession as a whole. This is the availability of courses of **further** training, with the purpose of developing an adequate high echelon of senior professionals, teacher trainers, advisers, and consultants.

Consequences of this Analysis

The argument so far presented is basically a simple one. It is that the profession we belong to is not a great and global one, of vast scope and influence and containing enormous complexities and subtleties. No single one of us, as a teacher, encounters all the possibilities of choice: indeed, most of us live our working lives within a single, fairly simple segment of the whole - we are usually aware of only the big toe of the TEFL elephant, or the tip of its tusk, or its tail, or its trunk. But just as the elephant exists as a complete and complex animal even if we can see only a part of it, so also TEFL exists, and is subject to all the many variables we have been discussing.

But we are teachers. We are members of the total profession of human education. And that places before us the responsibility for knowing what we are doing, for being aware not just of our own little segment of the profession, but (at least in broad outline) of the whole field, of the variables that now exist and of their consequences. What are these consequences?

The first and most obvious consequence is that any lingering nostalgia for a single 'best' method is completely mis-placed. No single method can conceivably be equally suitable for all values of all the variables - for all

learners, of any age, regardless of aims, of attitudes, of level of proficiency, and so forth.

A second consequence is that the individual teacher needs to acquire the widest and deepest understanding of all the variables he or she is likely to encounter in the language learning/teaching situation where he will be working. The teacher needs to select, devise and operate, for any given situation, that methodology which has the best fit, the closest match, with all the variables.

Behind the teacher is a third and final consequence of the variables facing us. This is a consequence for the TEFL profession. Now that TEFL is so vast, so complex, yet so important, it has become essential for the profession to have corporate ways of observing, monitoring, analysing and influencing its own development. Hence the vital importance not only of academic centres of excellence such as university departments and teacher training colleges, not just of resource centres like the Centre for Applied Linguistics, the Regional English Language Centre in Singapore, the British Council's English Teaching Information Centre in London, and similar centres elsewhere, but also of professional teachers' organisations - of TESOL, IATEFL, AILA and the rest - and of their programmes of activities.

This, then, is the link between the relatively drab practical daily activity of our working lives, and the brightly-coloured programme of a TESOL Convention. Here is where we learn from each other about variables other than the ones we know of and meet in our ordinary life; here is where we exchange experiences, and where we discover that the wall, the spear, the snake, the tree, the fan and the rope, are in fact part of an elephant. Our profession becomes daily even more complex, subtle, sophisticated. We as teachers must learn to adapt, chameleon-like, to an ever-greater array of variables, so that we can offer to our students not a single technique which may or may not be effective, but the best possible choice of teaching for the particular variables that operate in our own students' individual circumstances.

---

(5) If I have any reservation of substance about the claims made for the Silent Wall, Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia, it is that they seem to **claim** to be suitable in all circumstances. I find that counter-intuitive, and against experience.

96

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALLEN, J.P.B. and S.P. Corder, eds., *The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics*, 4 vols., Oxford University Press London, 1974.

ALTMAN, Howard B. and R.L. Politzer, eds., *Individualising foreign language instruction*, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass, 1977.

BURT, Marina K., Heidi C. Dulay and M. Finocchiaro, eds., *Viewpoints on English as a Second Language*, Regents, New York, 1977.

CANDLIN, Christopher N., *'Communicative language teaching and the debt to pragmatics'* in Rameh, C. (ed.), *Sematics: theory and application*, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C., 1976.

CORDER, S. Pit, *Introducing Applied Linguistics*, Penguin Harmondsworth, 1973.

FATHMAN, Ann K., *'Variables affecting the successful learning of English as a second language'*, TESOL Quarterly, Vol.10. No.4, 1976.

HALLIDAY, M.A.K., *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, Arnold, London, 1973.

HALLIDAY, M.A.K. *Learning How to Mean: explorations in the development of language*, Arnold, London, 1975.

HALLIDAY M.A.K. and R. Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, Longman, London, 1976.

HALLIDAY, M.A.K., *Language as Social Semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning*, Arnold, London, 1978.

MACKEY, William F., *Language Teaching Analysis*, Longman, London, 1965.

MUNBY, John, *Communicative Syllabus Design*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978.

OLLER, John W. and Jack C. Richards, eds., *Focus on the Learner: pragmatic perspectives for the language teacher*, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass., 1973.

PAULSTON, Christina B. and Mary Newton Bruder, *Teaching English as a Second Language: techniques and procedures*, Winthrop, New York, 1976.

QUIRK, R., S. Greenberg, G. Leech and J. Svartvik, *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, Longman, London, 1972.

RICHARDS, Jack C., ed., *Error Analysis: perspectives on second language acquisition*, Longman, London, 1974.

RIVERS, Wilga M., *Speaking in Many Tongues: essays in foreign-language teaching*, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass., 1972.

RIVERS, Wilga M., and Mary S. Temperley, *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 1978.

SAVIGNON, Sandra J., *Communicative competence: an experiment in foreign language teaching*, Philadelphia Centre for Curriculum Development, Inc., Philadelphia, 1972.

SCHUMANN, John M. and Nancy Stenson, eds., *New frontiers in second language learning*, 1975.

SCHUMANN, John M., *'Affective and Social Factors in Second Language Learning'*, Foreign Language Annals (forthcoming).

SMITH, Larry E., ed., *English for Cross-Cultural Communication*, East-West Centre, Hawaii, 1979.

SPOLSKY, Bernard, *Educational Linguistics: an Introduction*, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass., 1978.

STERN, H.H., *Perspectives on Second Language Teaching*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, 1970.

STREVENS, Peter, *'A theoretical model of the language learning/language teaching process'*, Working Papers in Bilingualism, Vol.II, O.I.S.E., Toronto, 1976.

STREVENS, Peter, *New Orientations in the Teaching of English*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977.

STREVENS, Peter, *'Special-Purpose Language Learning: a perspective'*, in Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts, Vol.10 No.3, London, 1977.

STREVENS, Peter, *'English as an International Language: when is a local form of English a suitable target for ELT purposes?'* in English as an International Language, British Council, London, 1978.

STREVENS, Peter, *'Forms of English: an analysis of the variables'* in Larry E. Smith (ed.) English for Cross-Cultural Communication, East-West Centre, Hawaii, 1978.

STREVENS, Peter, *'English for International and Intranational Purposes: a shift in linguistic perspectives'* in Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics (forthcoming).

TUCKER, G. Richard, *'New directions in second language teaching'* in R.C. Troike and N. Modiano (eds.) Proc. of the First Inter-American Conference on Bilingual Education, Centre for Applied Linguistics, Arlington, Va, 1975.

TUCKER, G. Richard, *'The Implementation of Language Teaching Programs'* In Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning, ed. J.C. Richards, Newbury House, Rowley, Mass., 1978.

VALETTE, R. and R. Disick, *Modern language performance objectives and individualisation*, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1972.

VAN EK, J.A., *The Threshold Level*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1975.

WHITE, Ronald V., *'The language, the learner and the syllabus'*, RELC Journal, Vol.6, No.1, Singapore, 1975.

WIDDOWSON, H.G., *Teaching Language as Communication*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978.

WIDDOWSON, H.G., *Explorations in Applied Linguistics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979.

WILKINS, D.A., *Notional Syllabuses*, Oxford University Press, London, 1976.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

Mr Kennedy makes an interesting categorisation of EFL teachers currently engaged in ESP teaching (Fundamental Problems in ESP, ELT Documents 106).

Firstly there are trained EFL teachers who, through their general education, can handle most other disciplines at an elementary level. Unfortunately, nearly all ESP courses seem to demand somewhat more than this from the teacher. So secondly there are those who attempt to pick up some knowledge of the subject as their course progresses, thereby virtually doubling their lesson preparation time. Moreover, despite their efforts, they must ultimately depend on a subject specialist for assistance. This then leads to the concept of team teaching which Mr Kennedy mentions briefly but seems to advocate strongly. In fact the slight description he gives makes it appear perhaps idealistic for most ESP courses, although theoretically desirable. One example of a practical limitation would be that, of all the ESP courses currently being run throughout the world, only a minority must enjoy the benefit of having a specialist close at hand.

The third category, as Mr Kennedy labels them, are 'hybrids'. As one of 'these hybrids' I have been fortunate in finding myself at an advantage in many areas of ESP teaching, especially materials preparation and student objections/comments/questions in the classroom. Mr Kennedy appears to imply that 'hybrids' are the option to which team teaching is a lesser alternative but, as he points out, 'they are rare'.

I suggest a more immediate solution to the problem of achieving a balance between subject knowledge and language teaching in ESP may be found in the selection of staff recruited for these courses. Subject specialists, ie recent graduates, can be invited to join an ESP team at home or abroad for one or two years to work in cooperation with the EFL teachers. Between graduation and the beginning of the following academic year, such people could attend an intensive course designed to give an insight into the various aspects of EFL teaching. It can be imagined that an opportunity of work abroad for one or two years immediately following university would not appear unattractive to graduates.

Recruitment of such staff would more easily facilitate the team teaching concept since personality problems would be minimized, ie they would have no commitments other than working in ESP teams. Additionally, problems arising from non-English subject specialists having learned their subjects in their respective native tongues would also be alleviated.

Admittedly, the implementation of such a scheme may demand the services of a team of administrative gymnasts. However, if after one or two years, some of these graduates decide to continue in ESP, we may then look forward to the emergence of a new teaching generation of 'hybrids'.

Yours faithfully

C R J Watson
Athens,
Greece

101

Films and Books for Language Teachers
Produced by English Language Teaching Institute

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: GUIDES

The books are intended as discussion documents for workshops or seminars or as a stimulus for the individual teacher interested in new directions in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). Although each booklet contains examples of actual materials, these are not meant to be used as they stand but rather as illustrations of techniques of materials design which could be adapted to suit local teaching needs.

order ELT Guides from NFER Publishing Company Ltd
Darville House, 2 Oxford Road East,
Windsor, Berks. SL4 1DF

ELT GUIDE - 1 Communication Games

Edition 1979

Authors: Donn Byrne and Shelagh Rixon

96 pages 296 x 209 mm

paperback ISBN 0 85633 189 9

price £5.25 #

This deals with the principles behind making classroom activities truly communicative - and how these principles can be applied when designing games to suit particular students. Thirty two communication games are described; for pairs, small groups and the whole class, and instructions on how to make each game are given. The booklet is illustrated with photographs and drawings of actual materials. There are also sections on the use and adaptation of published games and on the storage and presentation of homemade games. A transcript of students playing some of the games is also included to show the type of language that can result. There is also a select bibliography and list of manufacturers and publishers' addresses. The booklet complements the ELTI film "Communication Games in a Language Programme".

102

ELT GUIDE - 2 Simulations

Edition 1979

Authors: David Herbert and Gill Sturtridge

68 pages 296 x 209 mm

paperback ISBN 0 85633 192 9

price £5.25 #

This has an introduction on the value of simulation in language teaching, on stages in the design and production of a simulation, and suggestions as to how stages in a simulation might be sequenced in class. Materials for four different simulations are given in full, with suggestions for adaptation and variation. There is also bibliography and a list of published simulations.

ELT GUIDE - 3 Oral practice in the Language Laboratory

Edition 1980

Author: James Kerr

96 pages 296 x 209 mm

paperback ISBN 0 85633 193 7

price on application #

This book deals with techniques of design and use of dialogues and drills for controlled oral practice based on language laboratory work. Different types of drills are described and exemplified and there is a section illustrating complete teaching units consisting of introductory dialogues and drills, usually linked by a story-line or common theme. A cassette recording of all the teaching material accompanies the booklet.

order from NFER Publishing Co Ltd
Darville House, 2 Oxford Road East,
Windsor, Berks SL4 1DF

Language Laboratory Management

Author: Ann Hayes

Due for publication in December 1980

A practical handbook designed to help teachers make the best use of their language laboratories. Deals with hardware options, the management of software and the administration and use of the laboratory as an integral part of the language programme.

103

Past Issues of English Language Teaching Documents

A thrice yearly journal containing articles on major themes and new developments in ELT, bibliographical supplements to other ETIC publications.

Games, Simulations and Role Playing
ISBN 0 900229 40 3

1978 titles

101 **English for Specific Purposes**
ISBN 0 900229 48 9

102 **English as an International Language**
ISBN 0 900229 50

103 **Individualisation in Language Learning**
ISBN 0 900229 49 7

1979 titles

104 **Developments in the Training of Teachers of English**
ISBN 0 900229 65 9

105 **The Use of the Media in ELT (Part 1)**
ISBN 0 900229 66 7

106 **Team Teaching in ESP**
ISBN 0 900229 87 X

1980 titles

107 **University of Malaysia ESP Project**

108 **National Syllabuses**

109 **Study Modes and Academic Development of Overseas Students**

Titles in preparation:

Teacher Training

Testing

Study Skills

Literature and Language

104